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the Mennonite

February 17, 1998

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the new kid on the block

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19 Down to whole wheat bread

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T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Farewell and best wishes

During the many years of the previous *The Mennonite*, we have been blessed with talented, conscientious editors, artists, writers and staff. To all of them, thank you for a job well done. *The Mennonite* was a well-balanced, thought-provoking instrument for the General Conference Mennonite Church. May the new *The Mennonite* be as careful in its presentation to the new Mennonite Church.—*Mary Ann Gertsen, Newton, Kan.*

I appreciated deeply the work of Valerie Weaver, *Gospel Herald* managing editor, who set such a high Mennonite literary standard through her mature leadership, thoughtful editorials and solid articles. I look forward to the new team of editors. J. Lorne Peachey will bring some needed continuity. I appreciate Gordon Houser's approach to balancing faith and am glad the arts will find their rightful place in our ongoing dialogue with each other. I look forward to Rich Preheim's unusual gifts in probing the Mennonite scene. And I hope Valerie Weaver's youthful yet mature and prophetic insights will find their regular place within our new publication.—*Leonard Gross, Goshen, Ind.*

Remembering, reporting John Howard Yoder

I was saddened at the announcement of John Howard Yoder's death (*Gospel Herald*, Jan. 20), both to hear of his passing and seeing how part of it was presented. Whatever the role of the churchwide press in disseminating news of moral failure by church leaders, it seems eminently out of place to review that as part of a death announcement. At what point does "forgiveness in the faith community" allow matters of the past to authentically be put to rest? —*Lloyd Kauffman, Irwin, Ohio*

The strangest thing I've ever seen in *Gospel Herald* church news is quoting the *New York Times* to report the death and significance of a "leading Anabaptist theologian." Isn't John Howard Yoder worth something original by *Gospel Herald*, the organ of the Mennonite Church, of which Yoder was a member? —*Willard M. Swartley, Elkhart, Ind.*

John Howard Yoder was probably the most brilliant Mennonite thinker of the 20th century and a special gift to contemporary Christian theology and ethics in general. In remembering his legacy, however, I feel it is critical that we also remember that Yoder abused his power and hurt many women via his inappropriate and unethical behavior. Sadly, Yoder's life is also emblematic of the historical reality that the church has too frequently been a place of pain and shame for women.—*Kent Davis Sensenig, Elkhart, Ind.*

The benefits of tithing

If all Mennonites were to tithe, we would have ample finances for all our programs. In 1957, Milo Kaufman challenged members of our church to take seriously Christian stewardship. My wife and I began to tithe and to try to stretch our church and charitable contributions. We find it most enjoyable to take seriously Micah 3:10, and we feel the Lord is doing exactly what he promised.—*John H. Loewen, Saskatoon*

Taking stock in prosperity

A letter in the Jan. 6 *Gospel Herald* says 15 to 25 percent returns in the stock market are a result of exploitation of people or nature. When the stock market goes down 20 percent, is this a gift to people and nature? The disciplines and creativity of a stock market where people seek high returns are one of the reasons that the people of South Korea are healthy people in a prosperous society. The lack of such a market is one of many reasons the people of North Korea are not.—*Allen Stoltzfus, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Where is help for Congo?

I was deeply touched by the two articles about the thriving Mennonite church within the Democratic Republic of Congo (*Gospel Herald*, Dec. 23 and 30, 1997). I was surprised that nothing was shared within these articles or the publication about a way to direct a financial contribution. In sharing this surprise with a more seasoned Mennonite, I was told that the new thinking on foreign mission work was that American Mennonites must be very careful not to engender financial dependency nor to appear as if we are a kind of rich older brother handing out his excess to a lesser-able sibling. Congo, however, has just suffered a revolution. Most people survive on subsistence farming. This would seem to me to warrant emergency assistance, something Mennonites have done in the name of Christ for decades. —*Carol Shearon, Ambler, Pa.*

The long and short of mission

I'm baffled as to what the article "Participants benefit most from short-term mission" (*Gospel Herald*, Dec. 30, 1997) is trying to say. At issue seems to be whether short-term mission should be emphasized or not. But "service-

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 007-2340) is published 48 times a year by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canadian post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453.

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Readers say *continued*

learning experiences" are not the same thing as "service projects," "service work" or mission. Why talk about them as though they were? I believe both approaches are necessary and valuable. Perhaps the short-term challenge is to facilitate cross-cultural service experiences without doing so at the expense of the witness that longer-term service and mission take to the world around us. —*Fern D. Yocum, Maijdi, Bangladesh*

Homosexuality, Scripture and discipline

I am disappointed that "covenanted relationship" has been used to refer to homosexual relations in question. I suppose the expression could be used if a child and parent would have a loving, consensual, intimate, lifelong relationship. This would also be a "covenanted relationship," although we would label it incest. There are also many men whose psychological orientation would lead them to take a second wife. It would also be a covenanted relationship, even if not recognized by the law or generally approved by the church, and called bigamy. —*Noah Hochstetler, Dangriga, Belize*

In regard to homosexuality, let's look at the facts: (1) Research shows that sexual orientation is determined either before birth or very early in life. (2) It has been found that 95 percent of all reported incidents of child sexual abuse are committed by heterosexual men. People who are gay and lesbian are no more likely to be pedophiles than heterosexual men and women. (3) More than 10 percent of the population consists of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. (4) An estimated 30 percent of all adolescent suicides are committed by gay and lesbian youth feeling pressured to fit in. (5) The terms "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" did not exist prior to 1890, so these terms, when used explicitly in the Bible, must have been added at a later date.

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(6) The American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of disorders in 1973. Let's accept that we are all sexual beings and that our sexuality is part of who we are, just as God created us, unique from any other.—*Vicki Epp, Wichita, Kan.*

Beyond biases

Thank you to Michael A. King for his very helpful words in "What if bias isn't a bad word after all?" (*Gospel Herald*, Jan. 6). The invitation not only to choose friendship in the midst of differing perspectives and biases but to go beyond that, to honoring as dear our own and the other's biases as a way that we can be made whole, is a call to which I wish to commit.—*Jane T. Roeschley, Graymont, Ill.*

Whose words?

I recently read a Mennonite publication in which God was described as "she" and "her." Certainly God is far beyond gender, but do we have a right to describe God in any manner other than that which Jesus did? Our speech should reflect the language of Jesus, not the "grammar of Canaan." Our words also reflect a lack of knowledge with regard to Satan and his fallen host.—*Dean Swartley, Mercersburg, Pa.*

The culture of Martin Luther King

Perry Bush indicates the myth of Martin Luther King Jr. has been "functional for the powerful" (*Gospel Herald*, Jan. 20). Is it the "powerful" or the "urban underclass" who would have us believe that urban blacks are "forced" to utilize "illegal activities" for survival? Each one has a call to live in good conscience before God, who gives each the spirit and ability to choose whether to fulfill that call through acceptance of Christ's atonement and lordship. Environment may influence our choices, but it does not absolve us of the responsibility to live honestly—*O. Martin Wenger, Big Cabin, Okla.*

The fate of Martin Luther King Jr. is not unlike the fate of Jesus. Just as King's focus on militarism and systemic poverty has been conveniently forgotten, so have the hard teachings of Jesus on loving enemies, confronting injustice and standing with the "least" been marginalized by American Christians. While we reflect on a more accurate understanding of King, it is also worthwhile to reflect on why Mennonites did not embrace this man—the most important leader of nonviolent, biblically based social change in the United States while he was alive.—*Karl Shelly, Cheverly, Md.*

The new *The Mennonite* is being distributed to all subscribers to *Gospel Herald* and the previous *The Mennonite* as part of your continuing subscriptions to these publications. You will receive renewal forms for the new *The Mennonite* when your old subscriptions expire, either as individuals or as groups.

Wel

You hold in your hands a new arrival on the Mennonite scene. With a new birth comes anticipation and—perhaps—apprehension.

Regular readers of *Gospel Herald*, the 90-year-old magazine of the Mennonite Church, and the previous *The Mennonite*, a publication of the General Conference Mennonite Church for 112 years, will recognize some of what appears in these pages. But we also introduce new ideas, in anticipation of new readers we hope will join us as our two denominations become one.

The new *The Mennonite* will be published four times a month on Tuesdays. Plans call for a 16-page edition three times per month and a 24-page magazine once a month. There will be no issue when there's a fifth Tuesday in a month.

Week by week in these pages you'll find stories of encouragement in the Christian faith and articles that offer spiritual help, personal growth and a deeper understanding of the Scriptures. We'll provide information, address issues and be a forum for discussion. We also want to increase awareness of the international Mennonite and Christian communities as well as help prepare people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Joining me as editor in planning this new publication has been a host of others serving as staff, board and advisers.

Three of these are associate editors: Gordon Houser, Rich Preheim and Marla J. Cole. Gordon has the primary responsibility for fea-

When I first became involved in planning for an integrated periodical for the new Mennonite Church, a friend told me he hoped the new magazine could serve as a foyer, a gathering place, for the new Mennonite Church.

Consider the church foyer. Here are welcome, warmth, conversation. Here are introductions, news and stories. Here people of common faith, experiences and interests gather to worship. Here are inspiration and challenge.

Beyond the foyer are doors to various rooms. In one room of *The Mennonite* you may find a Bible study, in another a group discussing urban ministry, in a third a story of faith in action. One door will provide a passage to our sibling publication, *Canadian Mennonite*.

Here you will find interaction. The board and staff of *The Mennonite* want a two-way relationship. We will be here every week to inform and nurture. But our work will mean little without your responses and support.

The Mennonite is a gathering place for Mennonites to shake hands, talk, laugh, cry, worship and pray together. On behalf of its board of directors, I welcome you. Come on in. *—Cheryl Zehr Walker, chair, Interim Periodical Board*

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and come on in...

tures, Rich for the news and Marla for promotion and marketing. Gordon was associate editor and later editor of the previous *The Mennonite*, Rich worked for five years with *Mennonite Weekly Review* and Marla planned marketing campaigns for companies in Washington and Albuquerque, N.M.

Design consultant for this new endeavor is Judith Rempel Smucker. Other staff members are Melanie Mueller, editorial assistant and advertising representative, and Dotty Anderson, secretary.

Overseeing our work is the Interim Periodical Board, appointed by the General Conference Mennonite Church's Division of General Services, the Mennonite Church's Mennonite Publication Board and the general boards of each denomination. IPB members are Cheryl Zehr Walker (chair), J. Ron Byler, Larry Cornies, Ron Guengerich, Dave Linscheid and J. Robert Ramer.

The IPB has created an advisory group that includes Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, Lois Bartel, Gerald Biesecker-Mast, Barth Hague, Brenda Isaacs, Hope Kauffman Lind, Sharon Britten Miller, Vern Rempel, Jane T. Roeschley, Stuart Showalter and David Waldowski.

This is not our publication—it's yours. We welcome your feedback, your ideas. You'll find our mailing and email addresses on page 3. Also note our toll-free number (800-790-2498), which you may use for subscriptions or advertising or to talk with the staff at either our Newton or Scottdale offices.

May we together honor and glorify God as we become more like Jesus Christ, growing in our faith as members of the Mennonite church who reach out as agents of healing and hope in our world. *—J. Lorne Peachey, Editor*

Staff for the new *The Mennonite* include (from left) Marla J. Cole, Belen, N.M., marketing; Melanie Mueller, Halstead, Kan., advertising; Gordon Houser, Newton, Kan., features; J. Lorne Peachey, Scottdale, Pa., editor; Judith Rempel Smucker, Akron, Pa., design; Rich Preheim, Newton, Kan., news; Dotty Anderson, Scottdale, Pa., secretary.

One merged church, two parallel parts

Committee recommends Canadian, U.S.structures

CHICAGO—Hearing reactions ranging from rejection to disinterest in a plan that would have structured the merged General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) into four regions,the Integration Committee (IC) has gone back to square one.

The committee,meeting Jan.23-24,has proposed that the new church be comprised of two parallel national entities:Mennonite Church-Canada and Mennonite Church-U.S. The proposal now goes to the GC and MC general boards for action when they meet in late March in North Newton,Kan.

If approved,the first step would be to organize Canadian and U.S.general boards.The IC's plan calls for the two boards to meet separately except for once a year when they would join to form a Mennonite Church Council. Most programming for the new church would be done on a national level.

The plan also calls for national assemblies annually in Canada and biennially in the United States,at least for the first six years after the last joint GC and MC convention in 1999. In 2003,MC-Canada and MC-U.S.will meet together for a North American Mennonite Church assembly.

A two-nations model had originally been proposed for the merged church but was shelved in favor of working on a structure that transcended the U.S.-Canadian border.But feedback in the past several months pushed the two-nations idea back to the fore.

At an Oct.10-11 consultation with the IC at Upland,Calif.,western U.S.area conference leaders voiced concerns about the regional concept.The U.S.West region would have included the entire country west of the Mississippi River,prompting fears that the size would be unmanageable.Other leaders saw the region as another layer of bureaucracy.

"In other words,out here in the West,regions is a dog that won't hunt,"said Jeff Wright, Pacific Southwest Conference coordinator.

The regions idea did not receive much support at any of three other consultations held across North America during the last four months. At a Jan.16-17 consultation in Calgary,Canadian Mennonites emphasized the need for an organization of their own (see story page 21).

"Slowly I'm coming to realize that we have to have a primary loyalty,and I suppose it has to be the national one,"said Mary Burkholder, one of three Canadians on the IC. "But I have a new concern,that the overarching denomination not get lost in the energy to develop the U.S.side."

Several U.S.IC members professed a change in thinking to supporting the two-nations structure."My conversion on this has been a

Proposed mission statement for the integrated church

Mennonite Church—offering a distinctive witness as a people of Christ:

- confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,
- practicing believer's baptism,
- working for peace,
- calling one another to discipleship and mutual caring,
- uniting our voices in witness to each other and to the world.

Plan to add year to integration turned down

CHICAGO—The Integration Committee (IC) has rejected an idea to delay for a year the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC),thereby keeping 1999 as the time for the creation of a new,integrated general board.

The suggested delay came from the Integration Coordinating Group,created by the IC to find consultants to help with the details of church merger.One of the consultants "looked aghast at our process,"MC general secretary George Stoltzfus told the IC during its Jan.23-24 meeting. The consultant advised adding a year to the integration timetable so more work could be done on vision,mission and strategy for the new denomination.

The IC didn't like the idea."There's a lot of momentum going for integration,"said Ruth Suter. "I would personally feel very sad if integration were not done in 1999.If we let this timetable slip,the next time around we'll find another reason for extending."

Committee members reminded each other that last summer GC delegates in Winnipeg and MC delegates in Orlando had agreed to forming a new general board by 1999."We dangled 1999 in front of the delegates to see if they would buy it,and they did,"said GC general secretary Jim Schrag.

As for vision and mission,the committee noted the work already done for Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and for Vision:Healing and Hope."Does every group have to start over again?"asked Donella Clemens.

The IC did work on a mission statement for integration (see sidebar,above left) and agreed to send it to the March meeting of the GC and MC general boards in North Newton,Kan.—*J.Lorne Peachey* very gradual thing," said Don Steelberg. "But I've come to realize that we've not been listening to what Canada is saying to us."

But the committee realizes the one-church, two-parts decision will not be favored by everyone in the church. "The U.S. is saying, 'Let's keep it all together,' while Canada is saying, 'Let's organize on a national level and then we can cooperate,'" said Dennis Koehn, a private consultant who led the four consultations.

GC general secretary Jim Schrag said: "U.S. Mennonites, particularly GCs, will have to do some radical reorientation of their thinking, but I think it will happen quite rapidly."

Several committee members noted the plan will create problems for groups that now cross the border, such as United Native Ministries Council and Northwest Mennonite Conference. Both are MC organizations.

With the decision to organize the new church by national boundaries, the IC went to work designing a U.S. general board. The group agreed that members of the new board should not be chosen first by area conferences or church organizations but by gender, race and historical GC or MC background. The composition should be at least 50 percent women, at least 20 percent from racial/ethnic groups other than Anglo and at least 40 percent GC, since the current General Conference Mennonite Church will make up 35 to 40 percent of MC-U.S.

The IC worked on the new U.S. general board because there is no structure in place to do that now. The committee agreed that the Conference of Mennonites in Canada should work on the MC-Canada board.
—J. Lorne Peachey

Coaching a new concept to help church planters

QUARRYVILLE, Pa.—With its potential for lack of success, church planting can be a frustrating, lonely experience.

Former church planter Dick Landis knows those feelings and firmly believes that a relatively new concept of coaching helps eliminate many of them, allowing church planters to put their energy into growing vibrant, healthy churches.

About a dozen people met for a coaches clinic Jan. 12-13 at Black Rock Retreat to equip themselves better for their task of walking alongside church planters, offering encouragement, advice and wisdom. Landis, who now serves as coaches coordinator for Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), led the workshop.

"We need to be models, to walk with integrity," Landis said. "I have nothing to hide. [Church planters] know that they can ask me anything they want.

"Coaching is the kind of thing where you are in touch with people. It's not just doing the coaching session and being done for the month."

Said coach Darrell Minnich, pastor of Good Shepherd Christian Fellowship in Needham, Mass.: "You have to be a servant as a coach."

EMM in the early 1990s saw a need for closer oversight of church planters, who often struggled with loneliness, frustration and inadequacy in their new roles. Often these new church planters received oversight from a bishop but little one-to-one mentoring and guidance.

While Landis encourages face-to-face monthly meetings between coaches and church planters, they are not always possible. Mervin Charles, EMM Home Ministries director and a coach for two church planters in the Deep South, sometimes resorts to coaching sessions over the phone. In those cases, he said, not seeing the church planter's body language sometimes keeps him from really understanding what they are going through.

Hispanic Mennonite Convention president Samuel Lopez coaches several Hispanic church planters. Carlos and Nubia Villalobos in Sanford, N.C., see Lopez each month. The trip takes about three days for Lopez; almost two days are spent en route from and to his home in New Holland, Pa. Besides visits, Lopez talks with his church planters by telephone at least two times each month.

"We fuse them into the system from the beginning," Lopez said, "so when we phase them out of subsidies, they don't feel the difference in relationships too." *—Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

Darrell Minnich (left) and Samuel Lopez discuss how 2 Corinthians 4:1-12 relates to their coaching of church planters. Minnich and Lopez were among a dozen participants at an EMM-sponsored church planter coaches clinic.

In pursuit of restorative justice

EMU pair instructs McVeigh lawyers in 'victimology'

Zehr

Krause

There is vengeance. Then there is justice.

Into the vengeance-drenched hothouse of the Timothy McVeigh trial last spring stepped Tammy Krause and Howard Zehr. They wanted to pursue justice.

Krause is a student in the conflict transformation program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Zehr is one of the program's professors and a leading shaper and promoter of restorative justice.

McVeigh was on trial in Denver for the 1995 bombing of the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people and shattered countless more lives.

Prior to McVeigh's lawyers' cross-examinations and closing arguments during the sentencing phase of the trial, they invited Krause and Zehr plus two people who were victims of violent crimes to give them "a crash course in victimology," Zehr says.

Crime victims are frequently left out of the judicial process. In fact, Zehr and Krause say, the traditional justice system frequently pits the defense against the victims. Restorative justice emphasizes meeting victims' needs, getting the perpetrator to accept responsibility for the crime and repairing relationships.

But Krause and Zehr were initially skeptical of the lawyers' intent. "I know we could be misused," Zehr says. "I know their first job is in favor of their client." And in this case, that meant trying to protect a convicted and commonly demonized man from a death sentence.

But Krause and Zehr were soon convinced of the lawyers' sincerity to open channels with the victims and try to act humanely toward them. One reason was the lawyers' attempts to deal with their own traumas. They were emotionally shaken by the horror and magnitude of their client's crime, Krause says.

"The lawyers were feeling [perceived] ... as evil themselves by the fact they were defending Tim McVeigh," she says.

The restorative justice team held a victim-sensitivity training with the lawyers during an April 1997 weekend in Denver. As a result of the training, the attorneys wanted to offer victims a chance to meet with the lawyers. Krause served as an intermediary, arranging for phone conversations. In the end, seven people spoke with the lawyers.

"The attorneys were grateful for the conversations, but at the same time ... they didn't know where to take it," Krause says. "The victims were grateful because it was taking a big step in their healing."

In the end, the defense never cross-examined any of the victims called by the prosecution to testify during the sentencing phase. Zehr says cross-examination is what concerned the victims the most.

Now nearly a year later, Krause and Zehr want to build on the experiences from the most imfamous trial of recent U.S. history. "Whether we had much impact on the case, I don't know," Zehr says.

But he and Krause wish restorative justice measures would have been adopted at the trial's outset. "If we could have worked with the attorneys from the start, there could have been a way for [McVeigh] to take responsibility," Zehr says.

Krause notes that despite the cries for vengeance, McVeigh's death sentence has not necessarily brought healing to the bombing victims. "The people I met who didn't need the death penalty have been able to go on with their lives," she says. —*Rich Preheim*

Life or death? 'I wouldn't be able to make that decision,' Colorado woman says

Jane Birky of Littleton, Colo., had never been called for jury duty when she was selected as a prospective juror in the Terry Nichols trial.

Nichols was recently convicted of involvement in the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building in which 168 people were killed. When the recently retired elementary teacher was questioned by the judge and the attorneys, Birky told them she would have trouble judging Nichols.

"I haven't been the sort that holds up placards against the death penalty," she says, "but I felt I wouldn't be able to make that decision of life and death."

Birky, a member of First Mennonite Church of Denver, was not selected to serve on the jury. Her comments before the judge, attributed to "a Mennonite woman," were cited in media accounts nationwide. —*Timbrel*

Proposed Pacific Southwest polity statement includes no-discipline stance on noncompliance

PHOENIX—As issues of congregation-conference relations swirl around integration, Pacific Southwest Conference is considering a polity statement which could prevent the conference from disciplining a congregation.

The statement, introduced at the conference's winter assembly Jan. 17-18, says Pacific Southwest will offer "endorsement and interpretation of statements made by denominational assemblies." But the statement then says: "No congregation will be disciplined by the area conference solely on the basis of any perception of noncompliance with denominational statements."

Conference moderator Duane Oswald says the polity statement was prompted by the impending merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church and subsequent questions of congregational and conference authority. The no-discipline section, he says, was specifically in response to issues of church members in the military, homosexuality and women in ministry.

"We don't see conference as the arbiter of the faith but the facilitator of relationships and discussion between congregations," Oswald says.

In short, he says, the statement calls on the conference to refrain from passing judgment.

But at the winter assembly, some delegates were concerned such a conference position leaves the impression that anything goes.

"It doesn't say everything goes; it means we'll be in discussion," Oswald says.

The full polity statement—outlining what congregations and conferences should expect from each other—is now being discussed at the congregational level with the hope of taking action at the conference's June annual meeting.

Winter assembly delegates urged flexibility and sensitivity in dealing with cultural differences in light of church positions originating from a primarily European-American perspective.—*Rich Preheim with Doreen Martens*

Ex-controller pleads guilty to Bethel College embezzlement, agrees to VORP participation

NEWTON, Kan.—The former Bethel College controller accused of embezzling $1.3 million from the North Newton school has avoided one trial by pleading guilty to fewer charges and agreeing to make full restitution and give account of the stolen funds.

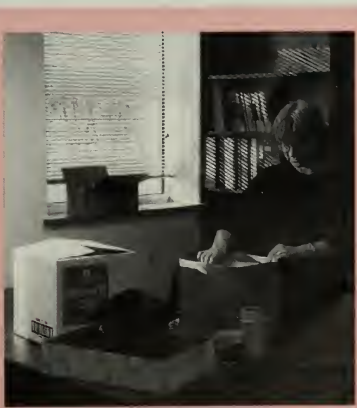
Michael Lichtenberger had been facing 219 counts of felony theft and forgery in district court. Under the terms of the plea bargain, he pleaded guilty on Jan. 27 to three counts of theft and four of forgery.

There was no agreement in the plea bargain regarding sentencing, scheduled for March 18. Lichtenberger could receive 11 to 34 months in prison and a fine of as much as $100,000 for each theft charge and seven to 23 months in prison and as much as $100,000 for each forgery charge. He still awaits trial on federal charges of money laundering.

Under the plea bargain, in addition to the guilty plea, Lichtenberger will give a detailed account of the embezzled money after the federal trial, make restitution of the entire $1.3 million and participate in the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program.

"Now that Michael Lichtenberger has acknowledged responsibility for his actions to the college and the community, we can move forward with recovery and healing," Bethel president Douglas Penner said in a news release from the college. "At Bethel College, we have a long-held belief in restorative justice. Working with the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program will help us in this healing process both as individuals and as a community."

Lichtenberger had been Bethel's controller for seven years when he was fired last June after a special audit discovered irregularities.
—*Karen Siebert*



Larry Bartel

Moving in

Hesston College interim academic dean Bonnie Sowers unpacks in her new office in the school's administration building. Administrators and staff recently returned to the building after a six-month, $1-million renovation project. In a Feb. 7 ceremony, the building was rededicated and renamed Alliman Administrative Center after Kirk and Jean Alliman. From 1981 to 1992, he was president and she was a mathematics instructor at Hesston. The building, built in 1916, is the oldest on campus.

Consultation assembles diverse group to search for ways to address homosexuality issues

AKRON, Pa.—With the church arguing and debating theological and ethical approaches to homosexuality, a small group of Mennonite church leaders met in Akron Jan. 9-10 to focus on what types of processes and leadership are needed to help the church faithfully address those issues.

"The consultation brought together process leaders and conference and denominational leaders, all Mennonites who want to find redemptive and healing ways to work at this incredibly difficult issue," says Carolyn Schrock-Shenk, who is director of Mennonite Conciliation Service and the spark plug behind the consultation.

The leaders, from both the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, attended as individuals rather than as official representatives.

"While the group was not fully representative of the complete range of perspectives, there was certainly potential for strong disagreement," says Dave Brubaker, another planner. "The fact that relationships and dialogue were both very healthy speaks to the quality of the process as well as the participants."

Schrock-Shenk says she was struck with participants' willingness to share openly and deeply about their pain and anxiety—and doing so with creativity and humor. "The level of trust was high from the beginning around an issue where trust has been severely lacking," she says.

Three consultation working groups composed six recommendations addressing leadership, polity and process. The recommendations will either be passed along to the appropriate church body or worked at by various participants of the consultation.

One recommendation regarding process is that a task force of people holding a variety of views on homosexuality be appointed to write process guidelines. These would provide handles on the issues and provide some consistency for conferences as they face the question of gay and lesbian involvement in congregations.

A polity recommendation calls for research into the history and biblical basis of Mennonite polity as the two churches work at a new denominational polity.

A recommendation on leadership urges more supportive networking and training for leaders to assist and equip them to face difficult process decisions on contentious issues.

"I am amazed and grateful with how well the conference progressed," says participant Marcus Smucker. "It exceeded my expectation for what could be done in an initial session. I take the long view on this, and I think we planted some seeds for a different paradigm for processing these difficult issues."—*MCC News Service*

CPT work in Hebron getting back to normal after death threats from terrorist group

Nearly four weeks after receiving death threats from an illegal Jewish terrorist organization, Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) members in Hebron, West Bank, are settling into normal routines.

"They are just doing business as usual," says Wendy Lehman of CPT's Chicago headquarters. "They are still being cautious, people going out in twos and that sort of thing."

A Jan. 18 email to CPT accused three members of the Hebron team of assisting Arab terrorists and called on the three to leave Israel by Jan. 21 "for their own safety." A similar message was left on the Chicago CPT office answering machine, adding that after Jan. 21, the CPT members' "lives will be in jeopardy."

CPT believes the threats came from a supporter of Kach, a former Israeli political party created by the late rabbi Meir Kahane. The organization—now outlawed in Israel—has been classified as terrorist by both the U.S. and Israeli governments. The seven CPT workers contacted the appropriate authorities after the threat was made.

In a statement issued after the Jan. 21 deadline, Hebron CPT members said: "Should we be injured or killed, it will be the result of policies that promote contempt for human rights and human dignity. We continue to operate under the assumption that God's redemptive power is at work here."

Since the threats were made, Lehman says, the CPT Hebron team has received support from both Israelis and Palestinians.—*Rich Preheim with CPT reports*

45 killed in massacre

MCC, CPT to respond after Chiapas violence

AKRON, Pa.—As increasing numbers of indigenous people leave their homes in the violence-wracked Mexican state of Chiapas, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) will provide $1,500 to help supply food, clothing and medicine to 2,200 families of these internal refugees.

The aid will be distributed through women's and religious groups already assisting those people. Many are seeking refuge in San Cristobal, the capital of Chiapas. MCC worker J. Eduardo Rodriguez, who lives with his wife in San Cristobal, will monitor the distribution.

Meanwhile, a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation will be in Chiapas Feb. 21-March 4 to meet with peace and human rights workers, religious leaders and those displaced by the violence in the region.

One of the latest and most-publicized incidents occurred Dec. 22 in the remote mountain village of Acteal. Paramilitaries associated with Mexico's ruling political party, the PRI, burst in on a midday Mass and massacred 45 people. The victims were displaced people who had fled earlier violence in the Chanalho area of the Chiapas highlands. They were members of the Bees, a peasant organization. The group's views and politics are similar to those of the more well-known Zapatista guerrillas, but its members do not support armed struggle. The Acteal attack was the worst act of violence since the 1994 Zapatista uprising against the government began. Witnesses said the refugees were attacked from several sides to prevent escape. The Mexican Red Cross reported that the deaths included nine men, 21 women, 14 children and one infant. Nineteen other people were wounded.

> **I am still trying to understand the hatred that would drive these 60 men to arm themselves, enter a church and shoot women and children in the back as they prayed.**
>
> *—Sara King*

MCC photo by Emily Will

MCC Mexico co-director Sara King arranges an ornament in the hair of 4-year-old Gloria Luis Jimenez, an indigenous Tzotzil girl in the town of Las Maravillas, Chiapas. The violence found elsewhere in Mexico's southernmost state is coming closer to Las Maravillas, King says. MCC is sending $1,500 for food, clothing and medicine for those displaced by the violence. CPT will also send a delegation to Chiapas.

The massacre was part of a wave of violence in the Chenalho area in recent months, causing dozens of deaths, numerous wounded and thousands of displaced people. While the killings are blamed on well-armed paramilitaries affiliated with the PRI, human rights monitors say the violence often takes place within sight of—and sometimes with the outright support of—the Chiapas state police.

"We are really concerned about the growing tension in Chiapas," says Sara King, MCC Mexico co-director. "The poorest of the poor are getting hit, and we don't see much response from the government. And I am still trying to understand the hatred that would drive these 60 men to arm themselves, enter a church and shoot women and children in the back as they prayed. Lord help us all."— *MCC News Service with CPT reports*

I watched the state kill my friend

by William Vance Trollinger Jr.

This is a story of how even the tiniest step taken in faith can lead you into deep, cold waters where the grace of God is sufficient to keep you from drowning but does not keep you from feeling enormous pain, anger and despair.

Just after midnight on Wednesday, Sept. 24, 1997, the state of Missouri put Samuel McDonald to death by lethal injection. That night I was inside the Potosi Correctional Institute to witness the killing. How I ended up there has to do with friendship and with the unforeseen and frightening implications of taking even the smallest step forward in faith.

Thirteen years earlier, in the summer of 1984, our family moved to Branson, Mo., where I was to begin work as an assistant professor of history at the College of the Ozarks. We were now residents of a state that administered the death penalty. By the time we arrived, dozens of individuals had been sentenced to death.

Since high school I had opposed capital punishment for what may be called the usual reasons: Poor and minority defendants are disproportionately sentenced to death, innocent people are sometimes executed, there is no evidence that the death penalty reduces the rate of violent crime. Most important for me as a Christian, capital punishment is state murder, and as such it violates the essence of Christ's teachings.

But while I opposed the death penalty, my opposition had been abstract. I felt compelled to do something, but I acted on my moral outrage in a decidedly modest fashion. Following up on a notice in *The Other Side* magazine, I contacted Death Row Support Project for the name of a condemned prisoner with whom I could correspond. This is how I became acquainted with Samuel McDonald, #CP-17 in the Missouri correctional system.

Over the next few years I was able to piece together Sam's story. He grew up in a poor, churchgoing family in St. Louis. At 17 he enlisted in the Army and ended up in Vietnam. He earned a raft of medals, but the experience traumatized him, particularly when, in the process of "sweeping" a village, he killed an infant and an elderly woman. (He had a recurring nightmare about this incident for the rest of his life.) Like many Vietnam veterans, he returned to the United States mentally and emotionally unhinged and addicted to drugs.

Drug addict: On May 16, 1981, Sam, high on "Ts and blues" (a heroin substitute), robbed and shot Robert Jordan, an off-duty police officer, as Jordan and his 11-year-old daughter were leaving a convenience store. A poor African-American drug addict shoots a police officer in front of the man's daughter—that easily could have been enough to condemn him to death. But Sam was also assigned an assistant public defender who, as the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported, got into shouting matches with the judge. The judge also refused to order a psychiatric examination, despite evidence that Sam was suffering from a classic case of post-Vietnam stress syndrome. The failure to order a psychiatric examination was at the heart of Sam's appeals over the next 16 years;Sam's attorney told me the night before the execution that he assumed almost to the end that this appeal would succeed (as similar appeals had succeeded).

Sam's appeals had just begun in 1985,when I sent him my first letter. We became regular correspondents,and in the next couple of years I visited him twice at the penitentiary in Jefferson City (where he was originally held).

When I took a job at Messiah College, Grantham,Pa.,in 1988,Sam and I realized that visits were probably out of the question. Sam called every two or three weeks,and we talked from 20 to 60 minutes. It seems a little strange to say this now,but we spent a good amount of time making jokes,ribbing each other or talking about sports.

> **His body convulsed,then became still. Sam,my friend,was dead.**

Our conversations were also serious. We talked about prison conditions,the status of his appeals and the Supreme Court (he was no fan of Clarence Thomas). We talked about God,organized religion and the efficacy of prayer. We talked about our families. I commiserated with him when his son (who was 3 when Sam went to prison) was shot and paralyzed;he commiserated with me when my mother died of cancer. He was probably more sensitive to my grief than anyone outside my family—in the weeks after her death he occasionally called just to see how I was coping.

The point is that Samuel McDonald and I became close friends. Despite my notion at the beginning of our correspondence that I would be the one giving to Sam,it turned out that I received much more from him than I gave. Sam also sent birthday and Christmas cards and notes to my wife and two daughters.

Last summer Sam ran out of appeals. He was given an execution date:Sept.24. While Sam handled this news with remarkable grace, I went into a tailspin.I felt devastated that my friend was going to be killed,and I worried that I had failed as Sam's "spiritual adviser." I also felt guilty for being afraid Sam might ask me to witness the execution. But Fr.Jim Heft at the University of Dayton (Ohio) and pastor Dorothy Nickel Friesen at First Mennonite Church in Bluffton,Ohio,where we had moved in 1996,provided wise counsel and encouragement,reminding me that Christ requires not heroism (of which I was in short supply) but faithfulness.

When Sam did ask me to serve as one of his six "family and friend"witnesses,I said yes. On Sept.23 my wife and I drove to the Potosi Correctional Institute,southwest of St.Louis in the Ozark foothills. At 10:30 that cold,rainy evening I arrived at the prison. After being thoroughly searched,I was ushered into a cramped waiting room,where I sat with Sam's five other witnesses:his son,cousin,attorney, minister and another correspondent friend. I learned much about Sam's childhood,his family's love and grief,and the near misses of Sam's appeals. At 11:40,after a stern warning from the guards that no "emotional displays"were permitted—"no standing,crying out or knocking on the window"—we went into the bowels of the prison and were ushered into a tiny observation booth adjoining and above the death chamber.(In two other observation areas were the family of the slain police officer and the state witnesses.) Just after midnight the guards raised the miniblinds.There,in a dazzling white room,lay Sam,on a gurney with a white sheet up to his neck.We could not see that he was strapped down and hooked up to the mechanical apparatus of death.He looked at us;we looked at him.He spoke rapidly,but I had no idea what he was saying.I repeatedly mouthed "I love you"to him.Then,after only a minute or two,his body convulsed,then became still.Sam,my friend,was dead.

Group prayer: After giving us a few minutes to look at Sam's body,the guards brusquely shut the miniblinds and ushered us out of the observation booth,out of the bowels of the prison and back to the waiting room,where we could retrieve our coats. Denied permission to have a group prayer—as one guard said,"We will have none of that here"—we were hastily escorted outside the prison. Fifteen minutes after the killing of my friend,I was standing in the rain,waiting for my ride.

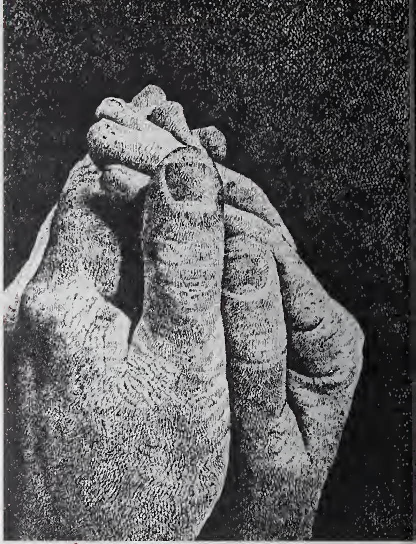
For 48 hours after the execution I had a compulsion to shower. The obscenity I had witnessed left me feeling unclean. Never in my life had I been so aware of the reality of evil as I was in that observation booth,watching the intentional killing of Samuel McDonald, a killing done in the name of the citizens of Missouri. For a long time I have known that capital punishment is wrong. Now I feel it.

In all of this I have also learned something about what it means to follow Christ.I began writing letters because I thought it was the easiest,safest thing I could do.But at the end I would have given anything not to have served as a witness to Sam's execution.This is a story of how even the tiniest step taken in faith can lead you into deep,cold waters where the grace of God is sufficient to keep you from drowning but does not keep you from feeling enormous pain,anger and despair.

William Vance Trollinger Jr.is associate professor of history at the University of Dayton and a member of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s,capital punishment all but disappeared from the American landscape. It seemed gone for good in 1972,when the Supreme Court (in Furman v. Georgia) opined that the death penalty was "arbitrary" and "capricious." Just four years later,however,the court (in Gregg v. Georgia) ruled that capital punishment did not violate the Constitution as long as there was due process. This ruling opened the door for states to resume capital punishment;in the two decades since Gregg v. Georgia,37 states have instituted the death penalty for certain types of murder.—*William Vance Trollinger Jr.*

Beginnings
a tM series



by James E. Brenneman

Beginning with B starting with two

Perhaps the first letter of the first word of the first line in the Bible begins with "bet" (B = two) and not "alef" (A = one) because before every beginning stands the One who alone creates the heavens and the earth, the twos, the 12s, the MCs and the GCs.

Beginnings are never absolute. Creation itself began more on the run than at ground zero, according to an ancient Jewish "midrash" (commentary) on Genesis 1:1. The rabbis have a field day with the first letter of the first word in the first line of the Bible. The first letter of the Hebrew Bible begins with "bet" or "B," just like the first word in this paragraph. "Bet" not only means "in," as "in the beginning," but also is the number two. It is a plural; it is a conjunctive. It attaches itself to other words and links ideas together. The letter comes from an earlier pictograph (on a cave wall) of a house. So "bet" has always also meant "house" or "household." The rabbis ponder: Why did God begin the Holy Scriptures with "bet" (B = two) and not "alef" (A = one)? Perhaps it's because plurals are basic to all that God creates. Perhaps singularity was the first thing God didn't like.

Whether one agrees with this interpretation of why the Bible begins with bet (B) and not alef (A), it is still true that reality as we know it does begin with twos or threes and not with an alef or a one. Indeed, the first act of creation was an act of separation. Creation starts with long division: "And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness God called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day" (Genesis 1:4-5).

On day two, God does more dividing and separates the primordial waters by placing a dome or firmament between them. With each cosmic cell division, God creates new and more intricate creatures until the whole earth brims with beauty. God steps back with each new wave of difference and declares it good.

Does God not like singularity? Ever since the modern scientific age, we've been searching for that one kernel from which all of life emerges. We've dissected, divided and pulled apart reality into molecules, atoms, electrons, leptons, photons, gravitons, gluons and quarks. Yet even quarks are never found individually but united in groups of two or three. The physicist Werner Heisenberg summed this up: "By getting to smaller and smaller units, we do not come to fundamental units or indivisible units, but we do come to a point where division has no meaning."

Sentences by conjunctions: In God's creation, for instance, there is no onion per se. If we search for the essence of onion—its core—we never find it. An onion is meaningfully defined only in the sum of its parts. Even language as we know it doesn't make sense unless hot opposes cold, short counters tall, nouns relate to verbs and all words are glued together into sentences by conjunctions. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Life is about conjunctions—the coming together of different entities, the contrast and complement, dividing and uniting. Life doesn't make sense unless "strange quarks" interact with "charmed quarks," unless electrons are repelled by protons and stabilized by neutrons, unless light is separated from darkness, unless the ego dines with the id, unless the leg bone is connected to the thigh bone, a Big

RNS

Mac to fries,MCs to GCs. Life is about long divisions and new entities.

At the pinnacle of God's creation in the first Genesis account stands the human creature, created in plural form,co-humanity,"male and female God created them"(1:26-28). There's something about this complementary plurality that is like all the rest of creation. There is no "essence of human."

Bundle of selves: From the get-go we were created in tandem,as a small community of people. In fact,we're more than just two opposite beings;we're a bundle of selves,billions of cells interacting with a billion molecules. Start peeling away our skin,our muscles,our spirit,our relationships,our families and our histories and there won't be any "us" left. It's this plurality of centers,this conjunction of many parts,this multiplicity of likenesses that are created in the image of God.

For whatever reason,God did not choose to create in God's image a perfected,rational, individual male as the pinnacle of the creation process. Instead God created a messy mixture of maleness and femaleness,a Mars-Venus complement,a duality (a plurality) to represent,to mirror who and what God is truly like.

Scripture begins and ends with God creating life to be in relationship. T.S.Eliot wrote, "There is no life that is not in community." The human family stands at the pinnacle of the creation process. Just as interacting particles stand at the core of life as we know it,so also the human family,the "bet ab"(the household), forms the basic unit of biblical community. Meaningful life begins with "B."

In the New Testament,in the new creation launched by Jesus,he does not choose to create a universal church,a metachurch or megachurch. Nor does he choose the Twelve to be founders of some future churches. Rather he chooses the Twelve to become a messianic community full of rarefied,sometimes frighteningly different folks.

In his book *The Twelve Together*,Ralph Morton suggests that it was the apostles' life together—a small group of 12 relating to each other over a three-year period—that modeled how best to develop into mature,healthy Christians. In this new,12-member household of believers came Simon the Zealot,an unpatriotic tax-hater,and Matthew the Publican,patriotic tax collector. F.F.Bruce says that in these two extremes meet the union of opposites. Once again,God in Christ created a messy group as the vehicle of his ongoing post-resurrection incarnation in the world.

After a long division,God is creating a new community of Mennonites better than the sum of our parts. But our parts do matter. The separation has been important to what each of us has become. Our newfound unity should not simply be a blend of our likenesses but a Spirit-filled household ("bet ab") of messy contradiction. Zwieback and shoofly pie,burritos and egg rolls,cannot be blended to make some new delicacy,but each can be shared at a common table in a new creation of human community. We have different spiritual DNA,but we can seek to become a fellowship that surpasses even our own histories,biology and blood. New beginnings are always post-ultimate because "in the beginning,"in every beginning, it has always been God creating. God alone, only God,is the source of all unity;all else is difference (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Perhaps God separates and divides so that our unity may be found only in God. Perhaps the first letter of the first word of the first line in the Bible begins with "bet"(B = two) and not "alef"(A = one) because before every beginning stands the One who alone creates the heavens and the earth,the twos,the 12s, the MCs and the GCs. Before every beginning stands the One,the Alpha and Omega,by whose grace we become one in our wonderful differences and of whom the first creation story declares,"God saw everything that God had made,and indeed,it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

We have different spiritual DNA,but we can seek to become a fellowship that surpasses even our own histories,biology and blood.

James E.Brenneman is pastor of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church. He also teaches Old Testament at the Episcopal School of Theology at Claremont, Calif.

Oranges in a hard time

by Jean Janzen

Midwinter in the fog
oranges sweeten and fall—
lamp-glow on the grass,
then mold and mush.
Four weeks I let them fall—
felt their fall.
Hour after sodden hour,
no desire to move. Cars
in and out of the driveway,
slam of doors. Birds bickering.
Let the rot do its work.
But then, what was that turn
toward light?
I was on my knees gathering
the firm and golden ones,
pulling them one after another
from the tree's dark hollows
to fill my mouth and arms.

Illustration by Lora Jost

John the Baptist in prison

by Nina Forsythe

This cell has rotted my voice to silence.
Now I must listen to my thoughts careen
from wall to wall in this hoary prison
of my mind. Suddenly nothing is clear
as it was in the desert, where the sun
and sand bleached bones and scoured wood clean
and truth could be grasped with a certainty
that gave birth to voice. A lone voice it was,
howling out of the desert like the wind,
but like the wind it had power to move,
to carve a path through the hearts of men.
And these hands, scarred and callused by the heat
of truth, were not full of sand but water.
How the people all came to drown themselves
in life-giving water. Did the muddy
Jordan really run so clear and deep for us?

Here, uncertainty festers; it oozes
from every crevice, trickles from every chink.
"Hold fast your history," the rabbi said,
but what is history? Within these walls
history, memory conform to the shape
of my present need; it is not the sun
that has struck my head so terribly dull.

So, forgive my asking but I must know—
are you the one? That morning I saw you
on the far horizon coming toward me
like a rising sun, I was so sure
I was ready to throw myself down, be
the path beneath your sandals. But, instead,
you descended into the water
beneath me and rose up, splitting the sky,
and down dropped the lightning dove and the voice
of thunder, and brightness stabbed my longing eyes.
There we trembled on the edge of glory—
to see you walk off into the desert …

Was it then my voice first faltered,
that certainty slipped from my hands? What
could I do? I continued as before,
waiting for someone or some sign, hoping
I would recognize it, and my own path
led me here. Now I hear you've emerged
from the desert—are you really the one?
I suppose I'm asking if I'm a prophet,
and, if so, must I bow my head and slip
beneath the water while your sun rises?

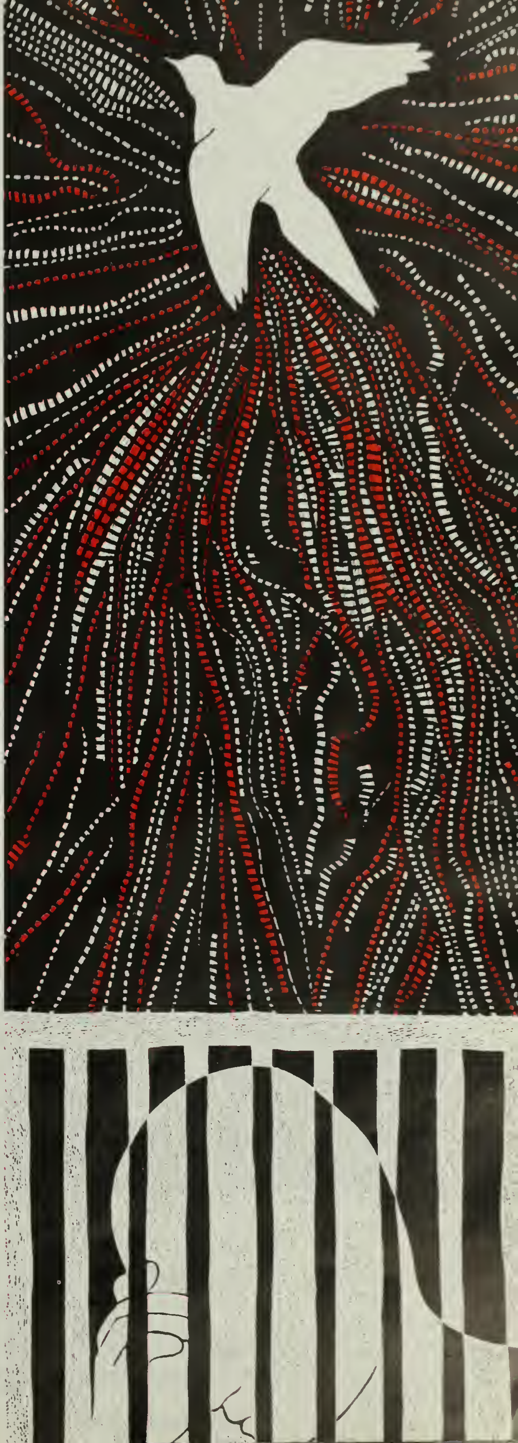
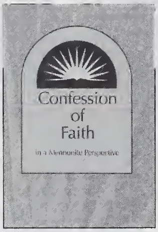


Illustration by Lora Jost

Your place for Anabaptist/Mennonite Resources



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D Michael Hostetler

Being Mennonite comes down to whole wheat bread

by Clarissa P. Gaff

Being Mennonite carries a host of memories and reflections, but it's more than simply genes.

I have traced the lines of my family tree with my fingertips and found no Yoder or Miller or Beachy perched in any branch. My grandparents do not speak German. My mother has never made shoofly pie. No relatives of mine are errant Amish. My grandmothers both quilt, not to make beautiful, artistic patterns like "Double Wedding Ring" but simply to reuse scraps of material.

When I was growing up in a small town in Indiana, our neighbors put in swimming pools, but my mother put in a garden. My father grew fruit trees along the chain-link fence of our backyard. My brother and I were disappointed, but the neighborhood children loved it. My mother raised spinach so that we could be strong like Popeye, and the fallen apples of the fruit trees factored largely into our autumn games. It was for us that my mother put in the garden. My mother canned and froze everything; we celebrated summer all year long when we sat down as a family to eat dinner.

But it wasn't just the garden that separated us from our playmates. We were only allowed to watch television for a half-hour a day, whereas the other kids on the block spent their afternoons watching cartoons. They had Nintendo and cable television, Barbies and GI Joes; we didn't. My brother and I were forced outdoors, to poke toads with sticks, to gather goldenrod, to throw stones in our neighbors' pools. My parents took us on bike rides, read to us and wheeled us uptown in our wooden red wagon to pick up the mail. It was small consolation, we sometimes felt, compared to the pleasures of the forbidden television.

In third grade, my best friend, Holly, got confirmed. She pierced her ears and wore a white satin dress with layers of frothy ruffles. She danced around in white patent leather shoes and clutched a matching purse. Her relatives sent cards and gifts. As if that weren't enough, she waxed poetic on catechism, confession, saints, rosary beads and altar boys. Jealous, I lamented the fate of being born Mennonite. I wanted the luxury of ritual kneeling and crossing myself. I wanted pierced ears.

Our class took a field trip that year to the University of Notre Dame. I lost myself in the Sacred Heart Basilica. We whispered our way through it. A girl raised on Crayola crayons, I loved the vaulted ceiling and windows. The stained-glass windows depicted saints and biblical figures in brilliant colors. Light tinged the floor crimson and cobalt and magenta. On the ceiling, cherubim swung amid golden stars.

That afternoon, I asked my mother why our church wasn't like that. She said ornamentation gets in the way of knowing God. I was appalled and vowed to convert to Catholicism as soon as I was old enough.

Wonder Bread: Being Mennonite comes down to whole wheat bread. All Mennonite kids carried sandwiches of whole wheat bread to school, while everyone else carried Wonder Bread. I wanted white bread, but I got whole wheat. It's pure and healthy and comes from the earth. White bread is American; it's additives, factories and industry. Baseball players endorse it. One player even carried his mitt to the field in a Wonder Bread bag.

In sixth grade, I felt it coming. I sensed it lurking in the background. And then it hit, when I was 12: an invitation to join a baptism class at church. I wasn't ready; I believed, but I was not prepared to print it on my skin, to declare it, to let the words roll off my tongue to squat there plainly, in view of everyone.

I decided to discuss it with the girls at the playground. I told them of my dilemma, to join or not. They gaped at me, all Catholic and

My family makes annual pilgrimages to the Mennonite Central Committee relief sale in Goshen, Ind. I have gone for as long as I can remember. I used to gasp at the fast-talking auctioneers who sold quilts, their Midwestern twangs ringing throughout the barn. My brother and I used to dash down the aisles of quilts, only stopping to gawk at those that were enormous or gaudy. We ran around the fairgrounds with other church kids while our parents worked the Self-help booth. We stopped only to gaze at roasting hogs, to test the weight of pumpkins, to decorate cookies.

Our parents would stop to talk to people they knew in college or friends from church. I would hold my mother's hand, twirling and pulling, bored by their talk. I came to eat: apple fritters dusted with powdered sugar, chicken noodle soup thick with vegetables, Mexican hot chocolate that scalded our tongues. We bought bread, noodles and rosettes to take home, their aromas mingling in the car as we drove, the warm September sunlight pouring in through the windows, putting us to sleep.—*Clarissa P. Gaff* saved, their eyes round, their lips parted. "You're not baptized, Claire?" someone asked. "Aren't you afraid you're going to hell?" The thought had entered my mind, but my mother had always reassured me.

Religion as a birthright: I turned to them and said no. I felt smug. I could choose whether or not I wanted to be baptized. It wasn't a rite thrust upon me as an infant. I smirked at those of other denominations who regarded religion as a birthright, not a choice.

When I hit 15, my sins seemed to roil and seethe within me. I was doomed to hell and could die at any time. My best friend had just lost her father—death seemed imminent. I believed; I was ready to declare, and I did. I was saved, easy as that. I was a Mennonite, a pacifist. Later, when my views on certain subjects came out in history or government class or my family's lifestyle came under the scrutiny of my classmates, I was asked, "Are you Amish?" I couldn't explain anything. Religion was unfashionable, and I shut my mouth, content to let them believe what they wanted, unable to say I was Mennonite.

I could tell you more, that my brother and I had a fighting chart, an attempt to reduce conflict in our house by taking away privileges every time we fought. Or I could tell you that my brothers and I had to give 10 percent of our allowance to charities, dropping the money into a Goshen College mug. I could tell you that I used to think in seventh grade that it was my duty to break up fights at school, the only excitement we ever had.

I'm a student at Goshen College, a Mennonite institution I long railed against. I didn't want to come here because it was Mennonite and because my parents attended. It was in Indiana, a place I've lived all my life, and I wanted to escape. Yet here I am, and I'm glad.

I love the spontaneous hymn sings and yawping at Shrock Plaza at midnight. I love that everyone here knows "606" by heart. I love that only 1,000 people attend this college. I love that my parents know other students' parents. I love purple bikes and living in a community. Most of all, I love getting to know myself—who I am and where I have come from. I am learning what it means to be a Mennonite.

I need to move on, venture out. The world is much larger than this contented community of Mennonites.

Yet I am not completely content. Goshen College contains a homogeneous group of people. Most of us come from similar backgrounds. In high school, there was far more diversity among my peers. I am too at ease here. Being Mennonite means leaving, looking at where I came from. I need to move on, venture out. The world is much larger than this contented community of Mennonites. I need to move to where I have to wipe soot off my windowpanes, meet people whose mothers didn't sew, learn new hymns.

Still, I will always remember the old hymns, and I will always come home.

Clarissa P. Gaff is a Goshen College sophomore from Rolling Prairie, Ind.

"There's a generation of leaders coming through AMBS who have a hunger for God, who find joy in prayer, Bible study and discipleship. That's the kind of leadership I want to see in Mennonite conferences and congregations."

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Integration Committee hits the road for constituency's ideas on merger

To create something lasting, the Integration Committee undertook a first—meeting with leaders from all 11 General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and all 21 Mennonite Church (MC) area conferences in four regional consultations in four months.

A major purpose of the consultations, held across the United States and Canada, was to test the idea of organizing the new, integrated Mennonite Church into four regions. But much more than that was covered at the sessions.

Thirty-five to 55 people attended each consultation, which was led by a private consultant, Dennis Koehn of Goshen, Ind.

Polity energized the central U.S. consultation Nov. 12-13 at Sturgis, Mich. In a straw vote, more than half the conference leaders in attendance agreed this to be a central question needing urgent attention. Several cited the action of Franconia Conference several weeks earlier, which ousted Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, because of its position on homosexuality and membership.

Several consultation participants said GCs tend to emphasize congregational authority and MCs conference authority. But Tom Kauffman, an Ohio Conference regional minister, wasn't so sure. He told of an MC area conference meeting in which someone said what the conference decided didn't matter because congregations would do what they wanted anyway. "And no one challenged that statement," Kauffman said.

For Charlotte Holsopple Glick, an Indiana-Michigan Conference regional minister, the issue was how one comes to truth. "Some of us value process, and in that valuing, we have room for a lot of different ways of doing things," she said. "Others of us value truth, and if something is already truth in our minds, then there's no need for process."

Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Central District Conference president-elect, agreed. "It's not that one group values truth more than the other; they have different ways of coming at truth," she said.

The regional structure plan took a beating at the western U.S. consultation, held Oct. 10-11 at Upland, Calif. Conference leaders feared the proposed U.S. West region—covering the entire country west of the Mississippi River—would be unmanageable. Others voiced concerns that regions would add another layer to what they saw as an already top-heavy bureaucracy. "We struggle with regionalism already within our conferences, and this only adds to the complexity," said Noah Kolb, Iowa-Nebraska conference minister.

Upland consultation participants did offer an alternative: Keep the current conference structures and organize the church, including its general board, around these.

That was echoed by the participants at the eastern U.S. consultation Dec. 19-20 in Baltimore. The group urged that representation on the new denomination's general board be by area conferences, although the participants recognized that the GCs would be at a disadvantage due to having fewer conferences.

The eastern U.S. group also recommended that existing GC and MC area conferences be grandfathered into the new denomination—that is, everyone is in until they vote to get out.

Some, however, called for "a more positive approach." "Congregations should choose to get in rather than vote to get out," said Miriam Martin of East Earl, Pa.

But in Lancaster, the largest MC area conference, moderator Ervin Stutzman said, "If we do it this way, we'll need to wait at least five years before taking a vote. Lancaster would want to wait and see what develops before deciding to get in."

Responded Mel Schmidt of Hyattsville, Md., "That would be like moving in and then getting married."

At the Canadian consultation Jan. 16-17 in Calgary, discussion soon turned to the need for vision before putting new denominational structures into place.

But Florence Driedger of Regina, Sask., said: "I'm confused. I thought we had a vision statement, Vision: Healing and Hope. How does this tie in with what I'm hearing? Somehow I missed a beat here."

Consultant Dennis Koehn divided the consultation participants into seven small groups and asked each to work on vision. Without conferring, all seven returned a unanimous verdict: Vision: Healing and Hope is a statement adequate for an integrating church.

Canadian participants also agreed that their church needs an organization of its own.

Koehn asked participants to put themselves on a continuum from one, representing a completely binational church, to 10, representing two national churches in one denomination. Participants weighed in heavily toward 10, with two declaring themselves 11s.—*J. Lorne Peachey*

> It's not that one group values truth more than the other; they have different ways of coming at truth.
>
> —*Janeen Bertsche Johnson*

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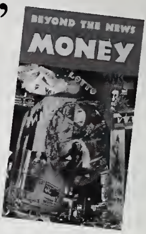

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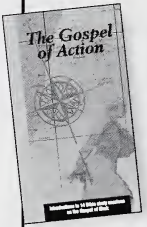

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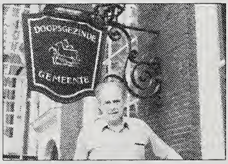

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MCC joins call for thaw in Cuban relations

WASHINGTON—As Pope John Paul II made his historic visit to Cuba last month, Mennonite Central Committee executive director Ronald J.R. Mathies and 139 other leaders of U.S. religious, humanitarian and development organizations issued "A Call for Healing and Dialogue" between the two countries.

The statement, published in the Jan. 21 *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, urged the U.S. government to lift the restrictions on the sale of food, medicines and medical supplies to Cuba and to restore direct flights from the United States in order to help promote family unification.

Other organizations signing the statement included American Friends Service Committee, Friends United Meeting, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.—*MCC News Service*

Integrated women's magazine debuts

EUGENE, Ore.—The first issue of *Timbrel*, the magazine of Mennonite Women, has come off the press and been mailed to all General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) congregations. *Timbrel*, a bimonthly magazine, replaces *Window to Mission* from the GC Women in Mission and *WMSC Voice* from the MC Women's Missionary and Service Commission. The two organizations have merged to form Mennonite Women as part of the integration process of the two denominations.

Dutch congregation shows tenfold growth

OUDDORP, Netherlands—Amid laments of the decline in numbers in the Mennonite church in the Netherlands comes a sign of encouragement. Twenty years ago, the congregation at Ouddorp had about 20 members. Today the ranks have swelled to 154 people, with attendance well more than 200.

There are several reasons for the growth, reports Ed van Straten, a Dutch Mennonite World Conference official. Ouddorp, a resort town on the country's southern coast, has drawn both tourists and Mennonites who have moved to the area.

Van Straten also says the other local congregations—mainly Reformed and Reformed splinter groups—are very strict and theologically conservative. Some members do not even go to church on Sundays because they believe travel violates the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. In comparison, van Straten says, the Mennonite congregation "offered a far more open way to worship, believe and act."

Ouddorp Mennonite Church is planning to plant a new congregation in the neighboring town of Brielle.—*MWC Courier*

Peace Tax Fund gets U.S. Treasury meeting

WASHINGTON—A U.S. Treasury official has promised to review legislation that would allow conscientious objectors to direct their income taxes away from the military. A nine-member delegation of church representatives, congressional aides and staff members of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund met Jan. 15 with Michael Thornton, Treasury deputy tax counsel, to garner support for the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act. Treasury officials in the past have objected to the bill largely due to the prospect of added administrative costs and reluctance to allow taxpayers to designate where their taxes will be allocated.

Find community at Bluffton College.

In the fall of 1994, Sara Lehman of Berne, Ind., and 229 other first-year students joined the Bluffton College community.

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The small Bluffton College community has allowed Sara to participate in a variety of activities. She is a four-year member of Brothers and Sisters in Christ (BASIC) and the volleyball team, and is a C. Henry Smith fellow. Sara has also performed in the Wind Ensemble, and has served in a peer leadership group and as a residence adviser.

As a mathematics/secondary education major, Sara found her professors to be outstanding scholars, yet very approachable. Serving as a math tutor and talking with her professors helped her define her career choice.

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Still come to Guatemala, workers urge

FRESNO, Calif.—Church workers in Guatemala still encourage visits and exchange programs to the country, despite last month's rape of five U.S. college students on a study tour there.

"Clearly there are risks involved in any cross-cultural setting, be it in the inner city of the United States or a country such as Guatemala," said officials of SEMILLA, the Guatemala-based Latin American Anabaptist seminary, in a Jan. 26 email to Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. "We don't sense that the incident represents a marked increase in assaults."

Fresno Pacific, a Mennonite Brethren school, is planning to send 11 students to Guatemala this summer with the SEMILLA program CASAS, which is designed to help North Americans learn Spanish, live with local Mennonite families and serve in local church projects.

Curriculum adds seventh denomination

NEWTON, Kan.—A seventh denomination has picked up Generation Why to promote in its congregations. The American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. joins the Brethren in Christ, Friends United Meeting, Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church, Reformed Church in America and United Presbyterian Church.

Generation Why is the youth Sunday school curriculum from Faith & Life Press, publisher for the General Conference Mennonite Church, and Brethren Press, publisher for the Church of the Brethren.—*GCMC News Service*

Goshen College rallies to aid fire victims

GOSHEN, Ind.—Goshen College students, faculty and staff have contributed $700 for funeral and other expenses following the deadliest fire in Elkhart history.

Six children and one man died Jan. 18 when a fire, which started from a hot plate, swept the house while the children were sleeping. The man killed was a neighbor who tried to rescue the children.

The children were living with their grandmother, who had been receiving Aid to Dependent Children and whose gas had been turned off since July.

"I was impressed with the campus response," says campus minister Sylvia Shirk Charles, whose office collected the money—*Goshen College Record*

Iowa MEDA chapter starts mediation service

DES MOINES, Iowa—Iowans facing conflict, particularly in the business arena, can turn to a mediation service started by the Iowa chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

The Iowa MEDA Chapter Mediation Referral Service is being underwritten by the chapter, but the goal is self-sufficiency. The service has seven mediators: two were trained by Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center and five by Iowa Mediation Services in Des Moines, which is involved with regional referrals.

The service so far has been involved in one mediation.—*MEDA News Service*

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MCC to aid Iraqi children with leukemia

AKRON, Pa.—Even while tensions escalate in the Persian Gulf, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is seeking funds to treat children in Iraq with newly diagnosed cases of leukemia. The two-year treatment project is expected to cost $4,000 per child. MCC plans to aid at least 25 children in the main pediatric hospital in Baghdad.

Iraq's pediatric leukemia rate is five times higher than before the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Some doctors, including international observers, suspect a link to uranium-tipped shells and other weapons used against the country in the war. Other observers speculate the increase may be due to Iraq's experimentation with chemical weapons.

Meanwhile, as cancer rates increase, the availablity of medicines decreases due to United Nations-imposed economic sanctions. *—MCC News Service*

Lancaster sewing circles productive in 1997

SALUNGA, Pa.—The women of Lancaster Conference congregational sewing circles were prolific in 1997 in responding to requests for needs overseas and at home.

The 48 circles reporting gave $77,699 last year, an average of $1,618 per circle. They made 167 quilts, 3,054 comforters, 3,188 layettes and nearly 7,500 infant, children's and adult garments. They assembled 6,589 health and school kits plus 340 Comfort 'n' Joy bundles for Bosnia and 309 Christmas bundles. The sewing circles also collected 10,000 pieces of soap and gave sheets, blankets and towels to voluntary service units and church planters. *—Lancaster Conference News*

Global church top Mennonite Brethren story

HILLSBORO, Kan.—In a year when the North American Mennonite Brethren (MB) church considered dissolving and work on a confession of faith progressed at breakneck speed, the top MB story of 1997 was around the world.

The Christian Leader, the U.S. MB magazine, cited the "Year of the Global Church" as the top story of the year. From a North American tour of a Zairian music group to the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Calcutta, the magazine wrote, "Mennonite Brethren became more serious about being a global family."

Ten Thousand Villages adds Ethiopian items

AKRON, Pa.—For the first time, items by Ethiopian craftspeople are available in Ten Thousand Villages stores in the United States. Ten Thousand Villages, the income-generation program of Mennonite Central Committee, features crafts from 30 countries. The new Ethiopian products include scarves, silver crosses and nickel necklaces and earrings. *—MCC News Service*

Demands for MBCM services on the rise

ELKHART, Ind.—In 1992, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries prepared and circulated resumes for 35 Mennonite Church pastors seeking congregational assignments. Five years later, that number jumped to 54, plus 46 more whose resumes were not circulated because they were candidates for licensing and ordination or were already in conversation with a specific congregation about a pastorate.

That is a threefold increase in MBCM's services to pastors. "This dramatic increase ... is evidence of the confidence pastors are placing in the calling system," says MBCM president Everett J. Thomas. "Congregations and pastoral candidates are learning the significance of working with conference ministers in the placement process."

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Resource speakers (left to right) Dale Stoltzfus, Sally Schreiner, Jim Lapp and Sue Clemmer Steiner share about church leadership changes and concerns during the annual School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 19-22. This year's theme was "The Ties That Bind: Building Healthy Leader-Congregation Relationships" and drew 240 registrants from 16 states and two provinces. Thirteen classes were offered during the four-day event, and Leslie Francisco, pastor from Hampton, Va., and president of the African-American Mennonite Association, gave the keynote address.

Canadian relief sale income up in 1997

WINNIPEG—Fifteen Canadian relief sales raised more than $910,000 (U.S.) for Mennonite Central Committee in 1997, about 6 percent more than the year before.

The sale at Abbotsford, B.C., raised $253,000, the most of any sale in the country. The New Hamburg, Ont., sale brought in $171,000, while the Morris, Man., sale added $84,000. The heifer sale at Guelph, Ont., raised $87,000.—*MCC Canada News Service*

Virginia high school passes fund-raising goal

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite High School students raised $168,369 for the school during the annual Christmas Fund Drive, surpassing their goal by more than $8,000. By making personal contacts, writing letters and donating wages, the students earned an extra vacation day during winter break plus $1,000 to plan a fun day at school.

CHM, COM, MBM to publish joint directory

NEWTON, Kan.—The Commission on Home Ministries, Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions will release in July a joint directory of their mission and service workers.—*GCMC and MBM News Services*

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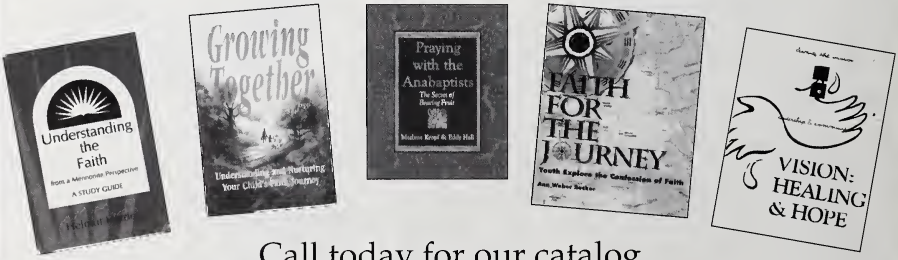
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Bergey, Daniel was licensed as associate pastor for church planting by Norfolk District of Virginia Conference on Jan. 11.

Good, Melodie began as intercessor and prayer coordinator at Eastern Mennonite Missions on Jan. 12.

Harrison, Susan ended a pastorate at Evanston (Ill.) Mennonite Church in August.

Lasure, Wayne began as pastor of Thomas Mennonite Church, Holsopple, Pa., on Jan. 1.

Miller, Keith was licensed as assistant pastor of Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church, Chesapeake, Va., on Jan. 11.

Ropp, Stacey began as minister of youth at Bayshore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., on Jan. 1.

Shirk, Hazel began as minister of special care at Bayshore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., on Jan. 1.

Yoder, Delmar has been ordained and installed as pastor of Strawberry Lake Mennonite Church, Ogema, Minn.

Events

Mennonite Central Committee annual meeting, Feb. 20-21, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

"Proclaiming the Word: A Symposium on Preaching in the Mennonite Tradition," Feb. 22-24, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Contact: Dale Schrag, 316-284-5356, drs@bethelks.edu.

The Giving Project Gathering, Feb. 27-28, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla. Contact: The Giving Project, 219-296-6236, GivingProject@Prodigy.net.

Business and Professional Women of the Mennonite and Brethren Churches business meeting, March 3, 6:30 p.m, Country Table Restaurant, Mount Joy, Pa. Speaker: Joanne Hess Siegrist. Contact: Sandy Miller, 717-295-2333.

Lancaster Conference spring assembly, March 20-22, Lancaster, Pa.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office annual spring seminar, April 19-21, Washington. Theme: "Guns to Plowshares: Toward a World Without Violence." Contact: MCC U.S. Washington Office, 202-544-6564, mccwash@igc.apc.org.

New Creation Fellowship Church 25th anniversary celebration, June 19-21, Newton, Kan. Contact: Jeanne Houser, 417 W. 11th St., Newton, KS 67114, gordonh@gcmc.org.

Northern District, North Central and Iowa-Nebraska conferences joint annual meeting, Aug. 6-9, Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Births

Bacher, David Loren, Jan. 14, to Kevin and Kelli (Mettler) Bacher, Homestead, Fla.

Beck, Logan Tucker, Nov. 30, to Curtis and Deborah (Schneider) Beck, Fillmore, Ind.

Birky, Elizabeth Jane Friesen, Jan. 9, to Brett and Anne (Friesen) Birky, Denver. Colo.

Bontrager, Lauren Rose, Jan. 23, to DeWayne and Sara (Miller) Bontrager, Shipshewana, Ind.

Botkin, Ashley Marie, Nov. 5, to Chris and Karen (Landis) Botkin, Harrisonburg, Va.

Chaffinch, Melinda Carol, Dec. 4, to Barry and Waneta (Zook) Chaffinch, Greenwood, Del.

Cobian, Marco Diego, Dec. 17, to Joe and Melissa (Gaeddert) Cobian, Ramona, Calif.

Engstrom, Nikyta Lynn, Jan. 10, to David and Angie (Gerber) Engstrom, Sugarcreek, Ohio.

Evans, Ethan David, Nov. 28, to David and Keily (Vargas) Evans, Aurora, Colo.

Hanna, Luke Milad, Oct. 2, to Milad and Susan (Smith) Hanna, Cairo, Egypt.

Haskin, Laura Eleanor, Oct. 28, to Bruce and Cynthia (Lyda) Haskin, Philadelphia.

Hertzler, Casey Brunk, Dec. 3, to Andre and Valerie (Brunk) Hertzler, Weyers Cave, Va.

Hodel, Grant David, Dec. 11, to Dan and Justine (Martino) Hodel, Roanoke, Ill.

Hoyt, Miriam Ariane, Dec. 28, to Mary (Hostetler) and Peter Hoyt, Goshen, Ind.

Jones, Dalton Jantzi, Nov. 27, to Michelle (Jantzi) and Tyler Jones, Lowville, N.Y.

Kirkbride, Tyler David, Nov. 16, to Allison (Reibling) and Jason Kirkbride, Tavistock, Ont.

Kolb, Alyssa Susan, Jan. 16, to Amy (Moyer) and Brian Kolb, Telford, Pa.

Meet a
dock worker ...

Kreider, Norah Elizabeth Anne, Nov.13,to Ruth and Uli Kreider-Stemfle,Munich,Germany.

Landis, Maddison Paige, Jan.20, to Charla (Bauman) and D.Scott Landis,Telford,Pa.

Lapp, John Ethan, Nov.4,to John F.and Sandra (Shenk) Lapp, Goshen,Ind.

Lapp, Leah Catherine, Oct.19,to David and Cindy (Lehman) Lapp, Lowville,N.Y.

Lyndaker, Taylor Brooke, April 14, to Bradley and Gay (Noftsier) Lyndaker,Lowville,N.Y.

Lyter, Blake Olivia, Dec.29,to Cheyna (Byler) and Larry Lyter, Belleville,Pa.

McKee, Shelby Lynn, Jan.9,to Edward and Stephanie McKee, Henderson,Neb.

Murray, Jordan Lane, Jan.22,to Julie (Garner) and Mick Murray, Wellman,Iowa.

Nordlof, Annika Viola, Oct.3,to John and Sue (Whiteman) Nordlof,Philadelphia,Pa.

Oswald, Shaylla Rose, Nov.9,to Michael and Rebecca (Steiner) Oswald,Harrisonburg,Va.

Peachey, Luke Stephen, Jan. 5,to Annette (Beachy) and Troy Peachey,Sarasota,Fla.

Perry, Ivy Lea, Jan.19,to Roy and Sue Ann (Harder) Perry, Harrisonburg,Va.

Reesor, Clayton Rush: Dec.12,to Dale and Lois (Rhodes) Reesor, Scarborough,Ont.

Rohrer, Kelly Erin, Jan.14,to Anita (Zehr) and Jordan Rohrer, Harrisonburg,Va.

Rush, Austin Ray and Kordell Bruce (twins),Jan.10, to Connie (Hager) and Ray Rush,Perkasie, Pa.

Stauffer, Abigail Elaine, Jan.5,to Kristen (Evans) and Vance Stauffer,Lincoln,Neb.

Stauffer, Nathanael Phillip, Sept. 20,to Mary Beth (Moore) and Philip Stauffer,Chester,Pa.

Steria, Conner Jeremy, Dec.10,to Andrea (Dygert) and Jeremy Steria,Lowville,N.Y.

Stutzman, Jenae Yoder, Dec.6,to Rodney and Barbara (Yoder) Stutzman,Littleton,Colo.

Wilson, Joshua Glenn, Dec.31,to Sharon (Graber) and Scot Wilson, Lake Odessa,Mich.

Yoder, Emma Grace, Jan.21,to Angie (Brenneman) and Tom Yoder,Millersburg,Ohio.

Marriages

Anderson/Fuimaono: Jackie Anderson,Hartville,Ohio,and Poulete Fuimaono,Hartville,Dec. 20, by Henry Schrock.

Beasley/Gaby: Sonya Beasley, Goshen,Ind.,and Mark Gaby, Goshen,Dec.13,by Ron Adams.

Bowman/Leaman: Todd Bowman,Harrisonburg,Va.,and Maria Leaman,Philadelphia,Dec. 13,by Galen Burkholder.

Forrey/Metzler: Andrea Forrey, Mountville,Pa.,and Joel Metzler, Willow Street,Pa.,Jan.10,by Karl Steffy.

Green/Schamback: Todd Green, Atlanta,and Karla Schamback, Croghan,N.Y.,Dec.17,by Evan Zehr.

Groff/Moyer: Jamey Groff,Leola, Pa.,and Genevieve Moyer, Doylestown,Pa.,Dec.20,by Duane Bishop and John Leaman.

Hostetler/Lichti: Lori Hostetler, Belleville,Pa.,and Jason Lichti, Goshen,Ind.,Nov.29,by Max Zook.

Lerma/Shriner: Michael Lerma, West Lafayette,Ind.,and Heather Shriner,West Lafayette,Dec.27, by Ron Adams.

Miller/Wanberg: Alton Miller, Middlebury,Ind.,and Margaret Wanberg,South Bend,Ind.,Dec. 31,by Linford Martin.

Schlabach/Yoder: Sandra Schlabach,Hartville,Ohio,and Brian Yoder,Columbus,Ohio,Dec. 7,by Dave Hall and Henry Shrock.

Stover/Veitch: Bryan Stover, Wellesley,Ont.,and Sheri Veitch, St.Jacobs,Ont.,Jan.3,by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.

Weaver/Wenger: Mitchell Weaver, Elizabethtown,Pa.,and Cheree Wenger,Marietta,Pa.,Jan.3,by Dan E.Hoellwarth.

Deaths

Albrecht, Wilbur A., 90,Eureka, Ill.,died Oct.14.Survivors:wife, Ruth;children Jerry,Rachel Varona,Doris Zehr,Shirley Bachman;10 grandchildren;20 great-grandchildren. Burial:Oct. 18 at Fisher.

Birkey, Lowell L., 80,Kokomo, Ind.,died Jan.3.Survivors:wife, Eula ;children Rosalyn Beachy, Retha Martin,Geneva Niccum, Merle,Wayne,Lavon;stepdaughters Mary Key,Naomi Vandiver, Becky Bechtel,Rosa Gannon;14 grandchildren;12 great-grandchildren;one stepgrandchild;two stepgreat-grandchildren.Burial: Jan.7 at Kokomo by Lee Miller.

Eigsti, Dorothea Margarethe, 97, Morton,Ill.,died Jan.5.Survivors: children Joyce Hofer,Carol;four grandchildren;four great-grandchildren.Burial: Jan.7 at Pekin, Ill.

Elvert, Ruth Drawbond, 83, Glendive,Mont.,died Dec.22. Survivor:husband,John.Burial: Dec.27 at Coalridge,Mont.,by Glen Williamson.

Fetterman, Allen, 80,Wauseon, Ohio,died Jan.16.Survivors:wife, Lueen;children Joan Grieser,Jane, Rick;five grandchildren.Burial: Jan.20 by Wayne Pipkin,Charles Gautsche and Randy Nafziger.

Friesen, Frank E., 87,Henderson, Neb.,died Jan.9.Survivor:wife. Burial:Jan.12.

Goertz, Edwin P., 87,Newton, Kan.,died Dec.2,of congestive heart failure.Burial:Dec.5 at Newton by Jim Dunn.

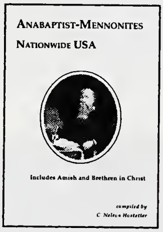
Goodman, Mary Esther, 79, Elkhart,Ind.,died Jan.3.Burial: Jan.6 by Daniel Z.Miller and Russell Krabill.

Grout, Virgil Boyd, 81,Wellman, Iowa,died Jan.6.Burial:Jan.9 at Kalona,Iowa,by Noah Helmuth.

Herr, Mabel Newcomer Neff, 88, New Danville,Pa.,died Oct.14. Survivors:children William, Charles;one grandchild;two great-grandchildren.Burial: Millersville,Pa.,by Abram Charles, Herbert Fisher and Delbert Kautz.

Huebert, Lauren, 45,Henderson, Neb.,died Jan.18.Survivors:wife, Cynthia;children Lana,Ty;mother, DeLorris.Burial:Jan.21 at Henderson.

Hunsberger, Peter L., 91, Franconia,Pa.,died Dec.21. Survivors:wife,Viola;children J. Arlene,Sharon L.,Vernon L.,Barry L.;seven grandchildren;seven great-grandchildren.Burial:Dec. 26 at Souderton,Pa.,by Richard Lewman and Wellington K. Alderfer.



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Kauffman, Wilma Elizabeth Kropf, 84, Harleysville, Pa., died Jan. 11. Survivors: children Verla Fae Haas, Zolla P., Zella M., Wayne D., Dwaine D., Dwight A., Elton Lee, Dennis G.; 25 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 16 by Gerald A Clemmer and David B. Greiser.

Lapp, Dorothy Ellen, 85, West Liberty, Ohio, died Jan. 18. Burial: Jan. 21 at West Liberty by Randy Reminder.

Lyndaker, Andrew J., 85, Croghan, N.Y., died Jan. 13. Survivors: wife, Inez; children Dale, Wayne, Carrie Piazza, Lois, Susan Brouty, Laureen Emerson, Sandra; eight grandchildren. Burial at Croghan.

Martin, Emil, 84, St. Jacobs, Ont., died Jan. 10. Survivors: wife, Minerva; children Doreen, Diane Tremble, Ray, Sandra, Karen Huehn; 12 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 13 at St. Jacobs by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel and Anna Hemmendinger.

Martin, Martha Myers, 85, Chambersburg, Pa., died Nov. 18 of cancer. Survivors: husband,, Adam C.; children Richard, Donald, Barbara Miller; 16 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Nov. 21 at Greencastle, Pa., by Robert Cahill, Nelson L. Martin, Randy Martin and Timothy Martin.

Moshier, Reuben M., 84, Lowville, N.Y., died Jan. 6. Survivors: wife, Esther; children Loren J., Elwood J., Carolyn Schaffer; 10 grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 9 at Croghan, N.Y., by Evan Zehr and Elmer Moser.

Moyer, Mary Jane Leatherman, 51, Green Lane, Pa., died Dec. 29 of cancer. Survivors: husband, Richard B.; children Sheri L. Clugston, Robie S., Trevor L.; two grandchildren. Burial Jan. 6 at Finland, Pa., by Richard Lewman.

Puffinburg, David Dale, 54, Ridgeley, W.Va., died Sept. 24 of a heart attack. Survivors: children Tamara Gnagey, Christina Georgantas, Teshia; parents, Daniel and Olive Puffinburg. Burial: Sept. 28 at Springs, Pa., by Steven Heatwole and Gary Butler.

Ramseyer, Leander, 82, Tavistock, Ont., died Oct. 1. Survivors: wife, Katie; children Raymond, Anna Reibling, Verna Bender, Catherine Ward, Carol Ropp, Ken, Marilyn Filsinger; 23 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 3 at Tavistock by Darrel Toews and Julie Ellison.

Regier, Wayne, 49, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 1 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Anne; stepson, Luke. Cremated Feb. 5.

Reiff, Nathan E., 92, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 2. Survivors: children James, Joan Lyons; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Dec. 6 at Elkhart, Ind., by Daniel Z. Miller.

Schmucker, Hazel E. Lehman, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 24. Burial: Dec 1, Louisville, Ohio, by Daniel Z. Miller and Russell Krabill.

Schumm, Daniel Leroy, 69, Tavistock, Ont., died Dec. 24. Survivors: wife, Rita Schultz; children Bruce, Wayne, Paul, Virginia Mucuk, Mary Trachsel; 11 grandchildren. Burial: Dec. 28 at Tavistock by Julie Ellison and Fred Lichti.

Selzer, Lizzie Mae Yoder, 82, Canton, Kan., died Jan. 6. Survivors: husband, Wilbur E.; children John, Marilyn Mohler, Harold, Steven, Ben, Myron, Eldon; nine grandchildren; one great grandchild. Burial: Jan. 6 at Canton by Frank Willems.

Shenk, Lucy Wenger, 95, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 12. Survivors: children Paul, James, Ellen, Virginia. Burial: Jan. 15 at Harrisonburg by Loren Horst, Sam Weaver and Howard Miller.

Short, Willard C. (Bill), 79, Pettisville, Ohio, died Jan. 7 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Judy Blosser, Jan Cobb. Burial: Jan. 10 at Archbold, Ohio, by Randall Nafziger and Charles Gautsche.

Stutzman, Vernon L., 95, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 19. Survivors: children Margaret Kauffman, Marilyn Swartzentruber, Joan Hershberger, Leon, Duane; 19 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 24 at Goshen by Robert Shreiner and Vernon Bontreger.

Troyer, Cora L. Helmuth, 74, Sarasota, Fla., died Jan. 13 Survivors: husband, Jonas, children Beverly L. Karalus, Keith, Roger; eight grandchildren Burial: Jan. 17 at Sarasota by Barry Loop.

Went, William M., 42, Middlebury, Ind., died Jan. 12 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Karen; children Erika, William (Cole); stepchildren Brittan Frey, Garrett Frey; parents, Max and Zita Went. Burial: Jan. 14 at Goshen, Ind., by Robert Shreiner and Terry Diener.

Yoder, John Howard, 70, Elkhart, Ind., died Dec. 30 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Anne; children Rebecca Yoder-Neufeld, Martha Yoder-Maust, Elisabeth Yoder-Ayyad, Esther Yoder-Strahan, Daniel, John David; 12 grandchildren. Burial: Jan 3 at Elkhart by Daniel Z. Miller.

Emily dreams of finishing high school, but for the past two years she has unloaded fertilizer from ships at Sasa Port in Davao City, the Philippines.

Emily earns 65 pesos—about $2.25 Cdn./ $1.60 U.S.—for an 11-hour shift. Her income helps buy rice for her family of 10. They have no money left to buy meat or vegetables.

Fertilizer dust triggers coughs and skin diseases in many of the children and young people, like Emily, who work in Sasa Port. MCC worker Mary Ann Weber has befriended Emily and other working children at the port, and advocates on their behalf.

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Classifieds

Eastern Mennonite University seeks applicants for the following positions:

Social work: Doctorate preferred. Area of specialization: human behavior and social environment and five years of social work practice experience; area of competence: practice and supervision. Classroom teaching, coordinating senior field practicums, student advising and university service.

Biology: Ph.D. required. Area of specialization: human anatomy. Responsibilities include research and teaching in human anatomy, electron microscopy, introductory biology courses and advising preprofessional health majors.

Computer science: Ph.D. preferred. Area of specialization in one or more: operating systems, artificial intelligence, computer networks, fire walls or database. Experience in object-oriented analysis and design and UNIX a plus.

All appointment for fall 1998 (possibly fall 1999). Eastern Mennonite University seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices.

Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to William Hawk, VP and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; or email dean@emu.edu. Review will begin March 1. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Goshen College seeks applicants for the following positions:

Voice: A full-time, tenure-track position beginning August 1998. Qualifications include a master's degree and college-level teaching experience. The doctorate is preferred and certification and/or experience as a K-12 music educator are strongly desired. Responsibilities include applied vocal instruction, courses in music education, ensemble leadership and opera workshop/production.

Woodwinds: A full-time, tenure-track position beginning August 1998. Qualifications include a master's degree and college-level teaching experience. The doctorate is preferred and certification and/or experience as a K-12 music educator are strongly desired. Responsibilities include applied woodwind instruction with additional duties drawn from courses in music theory, music education and jazz ensemble leadership.

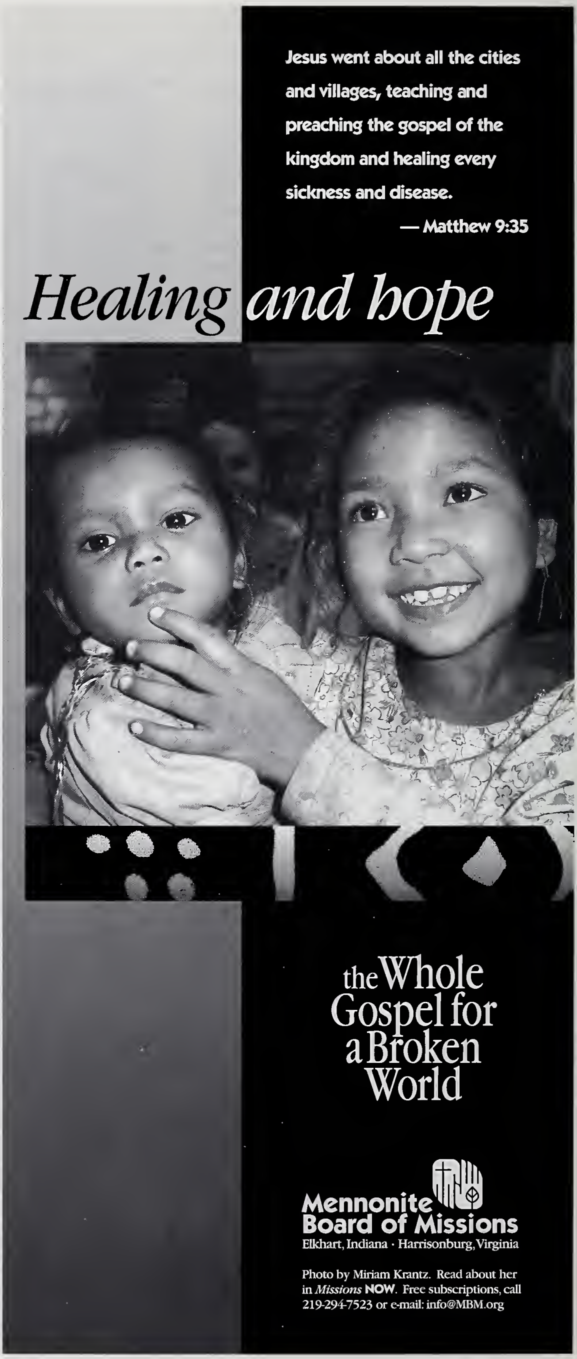
Strings: A full-time, tenure-track position beginning August 1998. Qualifications include a master's degree and college-level teaching experience. The doctorate is preferred and certification and/or experience as a K-12 music educator are strongly desired. Responsibilities include applied strings instruction with additional duties drawn from courses in music theory, music education and ensemble leadership.

Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Faculty members are expected to share that commitment. Send letter of application, curriculum vita and at least three professional references to Paul A. Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email dean@goshen.edu. Applications are encouraged through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu. Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled, and interviews will begin in February.

Hesston College seeks applicants for the position of **director of the pastoral ministries program**, a full-time, nine- or 10-month position that includes program administrative responsibilities, leadership of formation seminars and a teaching load of one to two courses per term. Qualifications include pastoral experience, administrative skills, connection to the Mennonite Church and a master's or doctoral degree.

To apply send or fax resume/curriculum vitae to Bonnie Sowers, interim academic dean, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; fax 316-327-8300. Deadline March 1. For more information email bonnies@hesston.edu or call 316-327-8207 during business hours.

Mennonite Mutual Aid has an excellent opportunity for a qualified individual to assemble, troubleshoot and repair PCs and to provide Novell, NT server, Win95 and NT desktop support. Must have a bachelor's degree, PC assembly/maintenance experience, proven positive people skills and good analytical skills. MMA offers a competitive salary, excellent benefits and a desirable work environment. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. Please send or fax resume to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 219-533-5264.



Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and disease.

— Matthew 9:35

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diaculture mediaculture mediaculture

by Gordon Houser

Welcome to this inaugural column in this inaugural issue of a new magazine. I hope you will use this column for your own reflection, for discussing issues with friends and for interacting with other readers of this magazine.

Why "mediaculture"? What is it? Media refers to the various forms of communication through which our culture influences us, such as books, films, music, television, computer games and many others. Francis Fukuyama defines culture as "a given community's complex of norms, rules, values, habits and identities."

While we may think of a certain Mennonite culture (though I don't believe there is one; there are many), in this column I will look at the broader North American culture and how we as Mennonites and other Christians interact with the "norms, rules, values, habits and identities" that surround us every day. I have combined these two terms in order to concentrate our attention on how we are influenced by various media and how they transmit cultural values to us. We will also consider how to judge such influences, how to stand against some and, perhaps idealistically, how to try to influence our culture.

I am combining what one writer, Bramwell Ryan in *Faith Today*, calls "implicit culture" (underlying meanings and values) and "explicit culture" (cultural products, like media, art and technology).

Separate from the world: Mennonite (and other Christian) history is filled with examples of believers attempting to withstand the influences of the surrounding culture, often using 2 Corinthians 6:17 as a call to be separate from the world. We think of Amish and Hutterite communities as well as other groups who have tried to live separately to some degree.

But it's always "to some degree." It is impossible to live completely separate from the influences of the wider culture. In this column I acknowledge that, yet I also ask what are good or bad cultural influences. We also recognize that we will not agree on simple answers to such a question.

We swim in an ocean of media and culture without thinking about it or analyzing how it might affect us. We imbibe these influences from our childhood, and they become so much a part of us that we don't even think about certain things—what we eat or how we dress, for example. In this column I want to encourage all of us to at least think about how we are being influenced. Though we will not all agree on how to judge certain influences (e.g., the Internet), we all need to become more alert to this culture we swim in every day.

As part of our being alert, we will look at certain cultural products, as well as reflect on positive and negative connections between biblical principles and aspects of our culture. We want this column in part to be interactive.

We swim in an ocean of media and culture without thinking about it or analyzing how it might affect us.

Thus, we invite readers to submit names of books they've read, films they've seen, music they've heard or TV shows they watch and reflect briefly on what is especially good or especially bad about that particular product. Underline "briefly." Due to space limitations, we can offer only cursory mention of various titles (see box below).

Send your likes and dislikes to Gordon Houser, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, or email gordonh@gcmc.org.

Media: Various forms of communication through which our culture influences us, such as books, films, music, television, computer games and many others

Culture: A given community's complex of norms, rules, values, habits and identities

films

Three recent popular films I've seen are these:

As Good As It Gets (rated PG-13), a romantic comedy directed by James Brooks;

Good Will Hunting (rated R), directed by Gus Van Sant;

Wag the Dog (rated R), a satire directed by Barry Levinson.

Each stretches our willingness to suspend disbelief, yet each is effective in its own way. The first two both explore themes of reconciliation and healing, though *As Good As It Gets* is funnier, more cleanly shot and more tightly written, while *Good Will Hunting* is rougher (beware the language) and a bit more melodramatic. Yet each earns its dramatic power, and each, in the words of the Jack Nicholson character in *As Good As It Gets*, "makes [you] want to be a better [person]."

Good satire is over-the-top yet realistic enough to make you nervous. *Wag the Dog* is satire at its best. Jonathan Swift would enjoy this send-up of the power of entertainment media to influence public opinion and, thus, politics. It's funny, but by the end it's also sobering.

books

Readers of the (old) *The Mennonite* may be interested to learn that former editor Muriel T. Stackley has just published *Oracle of the Heart: Selected Poems*. It is available from Wordsworth, 702 NE 24th St., Newton, KS 67114-9275. Many of the book's 43 poems have been published in various magazines, including *The Mennonite* and *Gospel Herald*. Illustrations by Lynette Schroeder Wiebe of Winnipeg grace the cover and headings of the seven sections into which the poems are divided.

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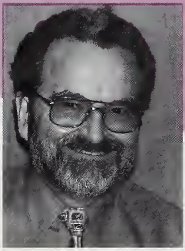

by J. Lorne Peachey

What you see is not necessarily what you'll get

This is it. What you hold in your hands is the first issue of a publication that looks toward a new, integrated Mennonite Church. It comes to you out of two traditions: *Gospel Herald*, serving the current Mennonite Church (MC) from 1908 to 1998, and the previous *The Mennonite*, published for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) from 1885 to 1998.

This new publication has been a long time coming. From the beginning, when GCs and MCs began talking merger in 1983, one publication has been held up as a benefit of integration. Ever since—through the work of the Integration Exploration Committee and now of the Integration Committee—a joint periodical has headed almost every list of good reasons for MCs and GCs to get together.

But the gestation time for this new venture has also been much too short. As editor, my work on the new *The Mennonite* began full-time only 5 1/2 months ago. The first staff member joined me in mid-January. Others have come on gradually, and since Feb. 1, seven of us have been hard at work on all the details that go with bringing out this first issue.

We've been able to live with this short start-up time by considering this publication a work in process. What you see is not what you'll continually get, even with this first issue.

Take advertising. This inaugural issue has eight pages of ads; regular issues will have one to two pages. Other parts of the magazine will also evolve as we grow older. We will make changes in design, in copy, in who-knows-what as we on the staff get our "sea legs" and grow to understand how we communicate for two denominations moving toward one.

You can have a say in what these changes should be. We welcome feedback on what you see in this and following issues as well as ideas for what should be included. You'll find our addresses on page 3.—*jlp*

With your 'cooperation, your sympathy, and your prayers'

The new *The Mennonite* is not the first publication for an integrated Mennonite Church. We join the *Canadian Mennonite*, which has been publishing since last September. In January a second integrated magazine came on the scene—*Timbrel*, the monthly publication of Mennonite Women.

Now comes the new *The Mennonite*. Our mandate is to be a publication for the new Mennonite Church with an emphasis on the U.S. context. While this will be our primary focus, we will also report on the work of the church in Canada and in other parts of the world. Until integration happens—now scheduled for 1999 with the formation of a Canadian General Board and a U.S. General Board (see story on page 6)—*The Mennonite* will serve both the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.

'If you are in harmony with the principles for which we stand, we will appreciate your hearty cooperation.'

We—the board and staff—who have brought together this publication have set ourselves to help readers do the following:

- honor and glorify God,
- become more like Jesus Christ,
- grow in personal faith,
- grow as members of the Mennonite church,
- become better equipped and informed for mission.

That's an ambitious agenda. But it's consistent with our past. "Our aim ... is to reach the young with religious instruction, and forward the mission cause of the church," editor N.B. Grubb wrote in the first issue of the previous *The Mennonite* in 1885. Daniel Kauffman, *Gospel Herald's* first editor, wrote in his first editorial in 1908: "It shall be the aim of the *Gospel Herald* to defend and promulgate the doctrines of the Bible and of the Mennonite Church."

We also echo these words from Kauffman: "If you are in harmony with the principles for which [we] stand, we will appreciate your hearty cooperation." And from Grubb, who wrote in 1885: "Above all, we ask for your cooperation, your sympathy, and your prayers."

Cooperation, sympathy and prayer—we in 1998 covet these as well. With them this publication can become the communication vehicle for the new Mennonite Church that we all envision.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

February 24, 1998

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he freedom of forgiveness

4 Slow peace response to U.S.-Iraqi tensions
8 Forgiveness: what it is, what it is not
11 Samson, E.T. and grace
15 Make missions the priority of our giving

T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Changing Anabaptist history

Mennonite World Conference has designated Jan. 25 as World Fellowship Sunday in celebration of the first Anabaptist baptism, on Jan. 25, 1525 (*The Mennonite*, Jan. 13). According to *The Anabaptist Story* by William R. Estep and every other Anabaptist history book I've consulted, the first baptism took place on Jan. 21, 1525, not Jan. 25.

On one hand, I've read that Alexander Mack and the original members of the Church of the Brethren refrained from recording the exact date of the first Brethren baptism because they did not want later generations to attach undue significance to the anniversary. On the other hand, commemorating the first Anabaptist baptism on Jan. 25 when it really took place on Jan. 21 is no more objectionable than celebrating Martin Luther King Day on Jan. 19 when he was born Jan. 15. But that doesn't change history.—*Jerry C.Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

Daniel Kauffman: whipping boy?

I was disappointed the photo used of former *Gospel Herald* editor Daniel Kauffman (*Gospel Herald*, Jan. 27) was of a man who was not a member of the Mennonite Church at the time the photo was taken in a studio. Kauffman was ashamed of the preconversion picture. Its use in *Gospel Herald* was not fair, honest or historically correct. There is a good picture of Daniel Kauffman at his desk while editor of *Gospel Herald*. Was it destroyed?

Daniel Kauffman devoted his life, talents and convictions in service to God and the Mennonite Church. Does he not deserve respect and fair treatment? Is he the whipping boy of the present Mennonite Church, the future Mennonite Church?—*Wilmer D.Swope, Leetonia, Ohio*

Blotting transgressions

On the death of John Howard Yoder, was it really necessary to include a paragraph about his ministerial credentials being suspended six years ago (*Gospel Herald*, Jan. 20)? I read in the Bible that when we confess our sins, God does not count our sin against us (Psalm 32:2), blots our transgressions (Isaiah 43:25) and remembers our sins no more (Hebrews 8:12). —*Anna Rose Kiesow, Wauseon, Ohio*

Discipline and differing interpretations

I think it is tragic and wrong that Franconia Conference removed Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, from membership. The removal is a signifier in a larger struggle for understanding what it means to be biblical and faithful, something Mennonites have usually approached with great energy. I think gay and lesbian folk have presented the church with the latest expression of a long-standing issue on Bible interpretation. We are not finished with the biblical discussion about church membership of gay and lesbian people.

My reading of the Bible is that there is nothing that precludes membership of gay and lesbian folk any more than there is anything that absolutely precludes leadership by women or membership of divorced and remarried people. All of these issues reflect tension in the biblical text. Can we continue the discussion? And while we are doing so, might we refrain from removing churches?—*Vernon Keith Rempel, Denver*

I am appalled at the lack of attention given to the Scriptures in the discussion of homosexuality. To hide behind the supposed genetic influence (they didn't know about genes when the Bible was written) is to deny that God is the creator of the human race (he knew about genes when he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and ordered that people practicing such be put to death) and deny that the Bible is Holy Spirit-inspired (he knew about genes when he moved Paul to write as he did in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).—*Verle Hoffman, Elkhart, Ind.*

I foresee no resolution to the homosexuality issue if we continue our present course. Neither side is showing any inclination to moderate its position or rhetoric. I am of the growing opinion that those congregations favoring the acceptance of convenanted homosexuals as members could avoid expulsion, and the wounded feelings such a decision involves, if they could agree to withdraw quietly and peaceably and form their own association of like-minded churches not related organically to any area conference.—*Roy S.Koch, Goshen, Ind.*

The Holy Scriptures say homosexuality is a sin. We have taken the Word of God and rejected the true meaning of it all too often, questioning its authenticity and then saying some things are just cultural or old fashioned. Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18-19 both warn us not to take away or add to the Word of God. How dare we say that this should not apply to us.—*Jeremy J.Sayer, Irwin, Ohio*

I've been reading the letters on homosexuality claiming scriptural ambiguity. How can this be when there exists a passage of Scripture like the first chapter of Romans?—*Kathleen Haddad, Scottdale, Pa.*

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say readers say

The support for the acceptance of homosexuality has without exception failed to address the Scriptures that talk about it. With this approach to Scripture, how could we ever expect to impact those who would do the same to the biblical themes and teachings of peace, nonviolence and nonresistance? And if one does accept homosexuality, then one must also accept adultery, fornication, sodomy, thieving, covetousness and drunkenness, as they are all in the same contextual bag.

Opinions should be stricken from the record, for they are only that and have no lasting stability. Perhaps there should be a moratorium on input that doesn't address the Scriptures that specifically address homosexuality.—*Loren Helmuth, Abbeville, S.C.*

There are more than 2,000 Mennonite congregations worldwide, and each of them has solved problems of membership, discipleship and responses to local needs. Germantown Mennonite Church has arrived at a solution for their particular situation. I do not believe they were asking others to use the same approach. We should not try to make all congregations conform to our methods. Practices we choose to not tolerate should still be permitted in other congregations.—*Luke Bomberger, Lititz, Pa.*

King's critique of capitalism

Thank you for publishing Perry Bush's article, "Can Martin Luther King be rescued from the taming of pop culture?" (*Gospel Herald*, Jan. 20). There was a good description of King's increasingly radical political agenda which threatened the status quo. It might also be noted that part of this radicalization included King's identification as a socialist in later years. How often is his criticism of capitalism brought up on the holiday dedicated to him?
—*Gary Olsen-Hasek, Portland, Ore.*

Mobilization against Iraqi war slow in coming

While the Clinton administration has been mobilizing troops and marshalling public and international support for military action against Iraq, U.S. Mennonites have been seemingly slow to respond with messages of peace, said three leaders of Mennonite peace organizations in Feb. 16 interviews.

The Mennonite Church (MC) Peace and Justice Committee, General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) peace and justice office and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Washington Office have heard of only a handful of congregations offering paeace witnesses in the face of escalating hostilities.

"I suppose there is a certain element of feeling jaded about the situation," said MCC U.S. Washington Office director J. Daryl Byler. "I don't know if people realize how close we are to the brink of war."

He said it has been mostly individuals and not congregations who have contacted his office for ways to respond to the threat of U.S. attacks on Iraq.

Doug Krehbiel, director of GC peace and justice resources, said he has received some calls from youth pastors regarding the draft, "but I'm talking two or three calls at most."

As of Feb. 14, MC minister of peace and justice Susan Mark Landis had not received a single inquiry. But she expected that to change.

"I would have expected more people," she said. "My guess is that this week they will become excited. The rhetoric increased dramatically over the weekend [Feb. 14-15]."

Byler and Landis said that rather than contacting their offices, congregations and individuals may have organized prayer vigils, letter-writing campaigns and other responses with help available elsewhere. Landis included tips for possible responses in a recent newsletter, and the Washington Office has such information on the Internet.

Meanwhile, colleges have been active in protesting potential attacks on Iraq. Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has started a series of Wednesday-night prayer vigils in the front of the county courthouse, while Goshen (Ind.) has held daily protests in front of the courthouse. Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has held a prayer vigil and organized a letter-writing campaign.

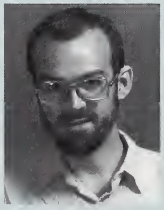
MCC on Jan. 30 sent an open letter to President Clinton calling for an Iraq policy of "time, patience and wisdom" instead of violence.

The letter notes the effects of the 1991 Persian Gulf War and ensuing sanctions on the Iraqi people. "Americans should not relish the thought of yet again seeing our military forces head out against the small and very weak nation of Iraq, however difficult and unattractive their leader Saddam Hussein may be," the letter says.—*Rich Preheim with MCC News Service*

Waving signs labeled "Mennonites for Peace and Justice," eight adults and two children from Neil Avenue Mennonite Church in Columbus, Ohio, attended the CNN-televised forum with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Defense Secretary William Cohen and National Security Adviser Sandy Berger on Feb. 18. The three officials were at Ohio State University to garner public support for a possible attack on Iraq.

"I had to sort out what was important to me so I could expplain it to my son," said Neil Avenue member Krisann Applegate. "It was exciting to to be able to talk about peacemaking when something really important was happening."
—*Jennifer Schrock*

First MCCers bound for Iran as part of exchange


Roy Hange

Maren Tyedmers Hange

AKRON, Pa.—After nine years of providing occasional refugee and earthquake relief, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) will send its first long-term volunteers to Iran as part of a new student exchange program.

Roy and Maren Tyedmers Hange are now studying at the University of Virginia in preparation for three years in Iran. Roy will study at the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qom; Maren will be at a related women's institute. Education, like many other aspects of Iranian life, is segregated by sex.

Two Iranians will attend the University of Toronto and relate to Mennonite communities in Ontario.

The exchange program is between MCC and the Imam Khomeini Institute. Roy Hange says the timing is fortuitous, given Iranian President Khatami's recent call for a "dialogue of civilizations" between the Islamic world and the West. "We want to participate in that dialogue," Hange says.

The couple believes it is important for Iranians to see Christians who pray and live their faith with integrity, supporting morality, justice and peace. Christians need to be "peacemakers and ambassadors in a time when religious identity is a focus of much conflict," Hange says.

"Our challenge is to be a Christian presence transforming perceptions," he says.

The Hanges already have considerable experience living in Islamic cultures. Roy spent three years in Egypt and six in Syria, all with MCC. Following their marriage, Maren and Roy were MCC country co-representatives in Syria for four of those years.—*Ardell Stauffer for MCC News Service*

MBM photo by Tom Price

Juliet Kilpin, a member of a London church-planting group, leads devotions on the Sermon on the Mount during a Jan. 31 conference at the London Mennonite Centre. Conference participants formed a network of Anabaptism-espousing congregations from a variety of denominations in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Crossing denominational divides in U.K.

Anabaptist group becomes congregational network

LONDON—A thriving Anabaptist movement in the United Kingdom, which has linked hundreds of individuals from many denominations since 1991, has given birth to a congregational network of "conversation partners."

More than 50 representatives of 23 congregations throughout England, Northern Ireland and Scotland met Jan. 31 at the London Mennonite Centre where leaders of the ongoing Anabaptist Network asked participants to take their involvement a step further.

During its seven years, the Anabaptist Network has organized conferences, developed nine home-based Anabaptist study circles, provided resources on Anabaptist concerns and published a quarterly journal. Yet, said Alan Kreider, a Mennonite Board of Missions worker in England since 1974, "A movement among isolated individuals didn't express what [Anabaptism] was all about because the movement is not about individuals but communities.

"We are here because we all think in some way Anabaptism contributes to our lives," Kreider told the gathering.

The new organization—which is still unnamed and will work under the rubric of the Anabaptist Network—joins congregations from Anglican, Baptist, evangelical-charismatic, Mennonite, United Reformed and Wesleyan traditions in ways they can be shaped by Anabaptist convictions. Organizers say the new entity will provide resources, articulate common beliefs across denominational divides, meet for fellowship, ask difficult questions and connect congregations that had become alienated from their own historic faith communities.

"A network, rather than a new denomination, [leaves] us free to maintain existing links and develop new links," said organizer Stuart Murray, director of church planting and evangelism at Spurgeon College, "but [offers] us opportunities to learn together from a tradition that we suspect may offer us at least some of the resources we need to develop churches that will be good news in a post-Christendom context."

Kreider and Murray invited the group, which was hosted by Wood Green Mennonite Church, the United Kingdom's only Mennonite congregation. At the conference, Andrew Francis, a United Reformed minister and a student of Murray's, was commissioned as the organization's development officer. He will work one day a week out of his congregation's office.

Once the heart of Christendom, England has seen times change. Nine percent of people attend church regularly and more believe in the paranormal than in God. In this context, some believers see Anabaptism as a model of being church that can help them discover a viable future for Christianity.

MBM photo by Tom Price

Stuart Murray, a leader of the Anabaptist Network, makes a point during the Jan. 31 Anabaptist Network congregational conference. Murray was one of two featured speakers.

"We became disillusioned with the restrictions and the dogma of the established church and were searching for a new way of living as Christians, in a manner that would be alive and relevant to people today," said Brian and Cathy Wheatcroft, leaders of a United Reformed congregation.

Said Baptist pastor Andrew McCausland: "I have this feeling the theology of Anabaptism is coming home. For me, the core principles of Anabaptism seem to be addressing the core issues going on in our society today: a spirituality that addresses community life, life together in the midst of a society that is breaking down, the sharing of physical resources in a society where greed is all around and abundant."

Murray called the U.K. Anabaptist movement "the prophetic minority" that can address society's ills. "We do not fully belong to the culture, but we are deeply committed to it," he said.—*Tom Price of MBM News Service*

Discovering, living, celebrating art

Fourth Mennonite Arts Weekend draws 200

CINCINNATI—Among all the factors that bind Mennonites together, one is vital for Dallas Wiebe, one that may not be obvious.

"I think one of the ways we are going to hold together our Mennonite community is through good writing," said Wiebe, emeritus professor of English at the University of Cincinnati. "Good literature is as important to me as shared belief."

Wiebe, who read from his 1997 novel, *Our Asian Journey,* was one of the presenters at the fourth Mennonite Arts Weekend Feb. 6-8, hosted by Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship. Some 200 people attended to share what it means to be Mennonites and artists.

"If the church wants to recognize the arts as an important part of our lives—which I think they do—this kind of weekend energizes and affirms," said comedic actor and writer Ted Swartz of Harrisonburg, Va. "Anytime the arts are celebrated like this, I think it speaks to the larger church that this is important. It helps pull the tradition toward the arts in a way individuals can't."

Anytime the arts are celebrated like this, I think it speaks to the larger church that this is important.

—Ted Swartz

Swartz and Lee Eshelman, otherwise known as the acting team of Ted and Lee, performed a number of times during the weekend, including new work from a show they are writing about the Old Testament.

Other mediums represented included painting, photography, poetry, sculpture, liturgical dance and clothing design.

"Seeing people discover and live their art is what is awfully important to me, too," said organizer Hal Hess. "It's always refreshing just to see people doing what they do and feeling good about it."

This year's weekend was the third time that a choral piece was commissioned and the first that a sculpture was commissioned. Carol Ann Weaver of Waterloo, Ont., wrote *Shall We* and dedicated its premiere performance to her mother, Miriam Lehman Weaver, who died in September. The Goshen (Ind.) College Chamber Choir, conducted by Doyle Preheim, performed the piece as well as other selections.

David Hiebert

Joanne Sauder of Graybill, Ind., studies an exhibit of photographs by Franz Jantzen of Washington during the fourth Mennonite Arts Weekend Feb. 6-8 in Cincinnati. Other mediums featured included painting, sculpture and clothing.

Mahlon Smucker, a farmer from Wooster, Ohio, created the commissioned sculpture, titled *Faithfulness,* by welding discarded metal objects into a small tower representing aspects of Jesus' life and of Christianity.

The weekend also included the release of *Living Mirror,* a collection of poetry and prose by young Mennonite writers.

For the first time, the Ohio Arts Council supported the event with a $2,000 grant.—*Marshall V. King*

Plans start to emerge for college structure in merged church

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Shape is starting to come for how Mennonite post-secondary schools will relate to the denomination under the integrated General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC).

The Higher Education Integration Committee began work on structure during its Jan. 17 meeting. Initial talks call for an intermediate program board relating to all U.S. and Canadian colleges owned by or affiliated with the GC, MC or Conference of Mennonites in Canada. But not all schools would relate in the same way, and new configurations could emerge over time.

Meanwhile, discussions have started on integrated structures for Mennonite high schools and elementary schools in the United States and Canada.

Five schools enjoy major financial gifts

Money maybe can't buy happiness. But the mood at four Mennonite colleges and one seminary is certainly a bit brighter since they have recently added significant financial contributions to their accounts.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), Winnipeg, will split $2.8 million from the estate of Katherine Esau, an internationally recognized expert on plant anatomy who died last year in Santa Barbara, Calif.

The gifts are the largest in either school's history. Half of each college's funds are to be used for scholarships, student aid and support for the sciences. The rest is to be used at the discretion of the schools' presidents and boards. Bethel will receive an additional $1.1 million to endow a chair in plant sciences.

Esau was born in the Ukraine, the daughter of a prominent Mennonite leader. The family fled to Germany after the Communist Revolution in 1917 and settled in Reedley, Calif., in 1922. Esau's obituary in the *New York Times* said she "dominated the field of plant anatomy and morphology for several decades."

"While she never attended Bethel or CMBC, she strongly believed in the mission of Mennonite higher education," says Bethel president Douglas Penner.

Says CMBC president Gerald Gerbrandt, "It is gratifying to see someone's commitment to Mennonite higher education reflected in such a major gift."

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., has concluded its revised comprehensive campaign, reaching its goal of $11.9 million.

The Partners for Ministry campaign, launched in July 1993, was originally intended to raise $11.9 million in 3½ years. But because of the death of AMBS president Marlin Miller in 1994, the campaign was extended one year.

President Nelson Kraybill calls the campaign's results a miracle. "The miracle is that friends and supporters of the seminary have made this achievement possible in spite of the upheaval at AMBS resulting from the sudden loss of a president," he says.

The campaign included the creation of a continuing education center, library improvements and increased support for student aid and faculty salaries. Partners in Ministry also funded the annual Mission and Evangelism Institute, started in 1996.

"Because the campaign included operating expenses for the seminary, the longer time period means the amount allocated to special projects and endowment is less than originally expected," Kraybill says.

Goshen (Ind.) College will establish financial awards for education majors with the gift of $680,000 from Elizabeth and Harold Anglemyer of Elkhart, Ind. The Anglemyers were former Goshen College students and public school teachers. They both died in 1995.

Bluffton (Ohio) College has received $125,000 from Arlo and the late Leontina Raid of Den-mark, Iowa. Most of the gift will be used for a new academic center, including a large classroom to be named for Leontina, who died in 1996. The center is scheduled for completion by 1999-2000.

"When students preach in my classes, they are the preachers and I am part of the congregation. In one semester I may hear 100-150 student sermons. Always the scripture is central—the Word is there, and it nourishes me.

June A. Yoder

June Allilman Yoder
Associate Professor of
Communication and Preaching

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Photos by Harry Cutting

Forgiveness

What it is n

by Michael B. Ross

Forgiveness does not absolve the perpetrators of responsibility for their actions. We can't grant absolution, even if we wanted to. Only God can grant absolution, and only the perpetrator can seek it.

"If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you.But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done."—Matthew 6:14,15 TEV

I was born an unwanted child. My mother became pregnant with me when she was 16. She was unwed. Even if abortion had been legal in 1958, it wasn't an option for a girl from a good Catholic family. So she married a man she didn't love and gave birth to a child she didn't want.

My mother felt trapped. She settled into the austere and demanding life of a farmer's wife. She later said that God's punishment for her getting pregnant out of wedlock was a sentence of lard labor on the farm.

My mother came from an abusive family; she was mentally and physically abused. And as often happens, the cycle of abuse continued to the next generation. Since to her I was the cause of her problems, I received the brunt of the abuse.

Most of the abuse I experienced was mental, with one exception. She liked to give me enemas to "clean out the system." These occurred before I entered the first grade. It was painful, and when I lost control and made a mess all over myself and the bathroom floor, she screamed at me, called me stupid and worthless. What hurts most today is knowing that back then I was just a little kid who believed every word my mother told me.

For years I locked the memories and the pain in the back of my mind. Then one day I was stabbed in the abdomen and told by the hospital staff that I needed a barium enema to see if my intestines had been punctured. I panicked. All the memories and the pain came rushing back. That was six years ago.

My mother and I have been estranged for over 15 years. I carried around a lot of anger toward her for years. I slowly came to realize that my anger was destroying my soul.

A friend sent me some books on forgiveness. In *Forgiveness:A Bold Choice for a Peaceful Heart*, Robin Casarjian writes, "Resentment has been compared to holding onto a burning ember with the intention of throwing it at another, all the while burning yourself." And William A. Meninger in *The Process of Forgiveness* writes, "When we allow ourselves to remain wounded, bitter, resentful people, we contaminate not only ourselves but everyone we contact. Our family, our children, our friends, our community, our society, our very world is marred, soiled and degraded."

I realized they were writing about me. I had developed a mental illness, the roots of which, my psychiatrists believed, were embedded in the abuse I had received as a child. The mental illness led me to kill. I became a serial killer, putting me on death row, destroying my family and the families of my victims. Ultimately it "marred, soiled and degraded" society and the world around me.

I wanted to change, but I didn't know how. I wish the process was easy, that all I had to do was say and believe that "I want to forgive" and be able to forgive. But the truth is that it took me a long time—years in fact—before I could honestly say, "I forgive you, Mother." And I could not have done it alone. It took several years and hard work on my part, plus much support from my spiritual adviser, my prison

hat it is

psychiatrist and my closest friend. I read several books, spent many days soul-searching in my prison cell and experienced anguish, despair, pain and self-hatred. But I discovered one of life's great truths: Inner peace is found only when you realize that you must change yourself, not the people who have hurt you. None of this was easy.

I learned three aspects of understanding forgiveness: (1) the illusion of power that comes with not forgiving, (2) the myths of forgiveness and (3) what forgiveness is.

The illusion of power

Forgiveness does not come easy, partly because of perceived benefits from not forgiving. There are four common illusions:

1. The illusion that if this hadn't happened, you would have had a more perfect life: Sometimes we don't forgive because it gives us a convenient way to escape responsibility for our lives. We can blame someone else for our unhappiness. I used to do this. When I was sentenced to death, I blamed my mother. I told myself that if someone else had raised me, I wouldn't have turned out the way I did. The truth is that I didn't seek psychiatric help when I knew I needed it. If I had sought that help, I never would have hurt anyone. I am responsible for who I am, not my mother.

2. The illusion of being one of the good guys: Not forgiving often defines who we are. When someone hurts us, we become the victim, a good guy, and the person who hurt us is a bad guy. This is another way of avoiding responsibility for our lives. I used to do this. While I was obviously guilty of serial murder, I tried to lessen my responsibility by claiming that I was in reality a victim—as if that would make me less guilty. By forgiving my mother, I had to accept full responsibility for my actions.

3.The illusion of power: Not forgiving can give us the deceptive feeling that we have power over those who have hurt us. We can hate them, and there is nothing that they can do about it. It gives us a sense of control because no one can force us to forgive or make us not hate anymore. It is the ultimate power trip. For me it was a way to gain back the control I had lost as a child. But the illusion was that I didn't have any power, for by not forgiving I gave my mother power over me long after she was no longer a part of my life.

4. The illusion that you won't be hurt again: By not forgiving we sometimes believe that we will not be hurt again. If we keep our distance, we won't be so vulnerable. By rubbing salt into our wounds, we keep our guard up and lessen the chances of getting hurt again. For example, I was afraid of forgiving my mother because if I let her back into my life, she might find a way to hurt me again. The irony was that by not forgiving her I allowed her to continue to hurt me because I couldn't let go of the past.

These four illusions give us incentives to not forgive. But they are just that, illusions. Only through forgiveness can we move on with our lives.

What forgiveness is not

1. Forgiveness is not forgetting: We are taught from a young age to "forgive and forget." But often this is not realistic or valuable. It would be nice to turn back the clock and erase the unpleasantness of our past, but it isn't possible. I will never forget what my mother did to me, and I expect there will be times when the memories will flood back. But I can forgive my mother. The real trick isn't to forget the past but to learn from it and use it to help yourself and others.

2. Forgiveness is not condoning: Forgiving doesn't mean the past was OK or not so bad. It was painful, and it affected our lives. Forgiveness allows us to deal with the past in a more effective manner, one that doesn't minimize the past but minimizes the effects of that painful past on the present and our future. It in no way denies, justifies or condones the original actions of the past. My past was painful, and my mother was wrong for what she did to me, but by forgiving her I can move beyond that painful past toward a less painful future.

3. Forgiving is not absolution: Forgiveness does not absolve the perpetrators of responsibility for their actions. We can't grant absolution, even if we wanted to. Only God can grant absolution, and only the perpetrator can seek it. We don't forgive for their sake but for

our sake. I forgive my mother, but she still must make her own peace with God and accept responsibility for her actions.

4. Forgiveness is not a form of self-sacrifice: Forgiveness is not pretending that everything is just fine when you feel it isn't. This is one of the more difficult concepts of forgiveness to understand because the distinction between being truly forgiving and denying or repressing anger can be deceptive and confusing. Either we forgive or we don't. We need to be honest with ourselves if we are not ready to forgive, because in the long run it is better to deal with our inability to forgive than to pretend to forgive. For me it was easier to deny the pain and pretend everything was all right, but that just delayed my healing.

5. Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness but of strength: When we forgive we understand that we don't need our anger and hatred to protect ourselves. Our strength comes from within. We no longer need the pain as a crutch. Forgiveness doesn't depend on who hurt us, what they did or whether or not they are sorry for their actions. It wasn't easy to forgive my mother, and I didn't do it for her. I did it for me, and I am a stronger person because of it.

Wallowitch

6. Forgiveness is not a clear-cut, one-time decision: We don't sit down one day and declare that we will forgive someone. You can't make a six-month plan of forgiveness or schedule certain days that you will forgive. Forgiveness cannot be forced. It takes time. All you can do is to help it along by confronting your painful experiences and try to heal the old wounds. It took a long time before I was able to let go of my pain.

Forgiveness doesn't erase what happened, but it does allow you to lessen and hopefully eliminate the pain of the past.

But the time I spent working through this process was worth it for the peace of mind I achieved.

What forgiveness is

1. Forgiveness is a form of realism: Forgiveness allows us to see our lives as they really are. It doesn't deny, minimize or justify what others have done to us, or the pain that we have suffered. It does allow us to look at our old wounds and see them for what they are.

2. Forgiveness is an internal process: Forgiveness happens within. It brings wellness and freedom. But this happens only when we want to heal, when we are willing to work for it.

3. Forgiveness is a sign of positive self-esteem: Forgiveness lets us put the past in its proper perspective. We are no longer victims. We claim the right to stop hurting when we say, "I'm tired of the pain and want to be healed." At that moment, forgiveness becomes a possibility.

4.Forgiveness is letting go of the past: Forgiveness doesn't erase what happened, but it does allow you to lessen and hopefully eliminate the pain of the past. The pain from our past no longer dictates how we live in the present and can no longer determine our future.

5. Forgiveness is recognizing that we no longer need to feel resentment and anger for our past: Forgiveness means that we no longer need these feelings as an excuse for our shortcomings. We don't need them as a weapon to punish others or as a shield to keep others away. Most importantly, we don't need these feelings to identify who we are.

6. Forgiveness is no longer wanting to punish those who hurt us: Forgiveness means we no longer want to get even. It is realizing the futility of these thoughts, that we may never be able to even the score. It is discovering inner peace from letting go of the past and forgetting vengeance.

7. Forgiveness is accepting that nothing we do to punish them will heal us: Forgiveness is understanding that the anger and hatred that we feel toward others actually hurts us far more than it hurts them. It is seeing how those feelings prevent us from healing.

8. Forgiveness is moving on: Forgiveness is recognizing all we have lost because of our refusal to forgive. It is realizing that the energy we spend hanging onto the past is better spent on improving our current lives and our future.

We all have painful incidents from our past. Most of us have made the mistake of trying to run away from our past. But no matter how fast or how far we run, the past will catch up. Forgiveness is a way of dealing with the past so that we no longer have to run. It allows us to deal honestly with our past and heal the pain. It helps us find inner peace from changing ourselves and our attitudes.

As Dr. Sidney Simon writes: "And that is what forgiveness is all about—working through the unfinished business, letting go of the pain and moving on for your sake. You forgive so that you can finally get rid of the excess emotional baggage that has been weighing you down and holding you back; so that you can be free to do and be whatever you decide instead of stumbling along according to the script painful past experiences wrote for you."

It wasn't easy, but I finally learned how to forgive. And my life is better for it, even here on death row.

Michael B.Ross is a condemned man in a Connecticut prison.He has been on death row since June 1987.He is currently under a stay of execution pending the completion of the appeals process.He expects to be executed before the year 2000.

Robert • Bese

Samson, E.T. and grace

by Elaine Maust

When our children were young, they asked us to buy calves. They saw the cute bovines frolicking in neighbors' fields and begged for calves of their own. At first Duane and I were reluctant, but we decided it was time they learned a few lessons about business.

We made careful agreements. Duane would pay for the calves and the feed. The children were to care for the calves. At the end of the summer, the children would sell the steers, repay Duane and then keep the profit.

We selected two Holstein steers. The trip home with the calves became an all-day affair, with flat tires on the borrowed cattle trailer. At last we brought them to our dilapidated barn and lots of space to roam and graze under pine trees.

Christine and Nathan gave them names. We named the larger white steer Samson because he was so big and strong. The smaller steer with the sweet face we named E.T., which stood for "eat turkey." The steers lived happy lives, staying in or straying from their pen at will, eating grain, becoming as tame and annoying as overgrown puppies.

At last the day came to take them to the sale barn. I felt uneasy. The markets were down, and Samson and E.T. were having a bad hair day. By the time we arrived at the sale barn the whole family felt uneasy. Christine wanted to leave; she said everyone at the sale barn was looking at Samson and E.T. "as if they were prey."

The children speculated how much money the calves would bring. How were they being treated? Who would buy them? How would they spend the profits?

That afternoon we picked up the check. My heart sank as I looked at the amount. The kids had lost money. In fact, the calves sold for less than what we paid for them.

On the ride home, two sober children tallied up their losses. During a crash course in economics, we discussed what it would be like to depend solely on income from cattle for all family expenses when the market was down. At home Duane listened to the whole story, then said, "You don't have to pay me back." Nathan looked stunned. Christine said she would pay back the money from her savings account.

"No," I said, "this is grace. You can't pay it back." Later I told Duane, "Maybe this time it is more important that the kids learn about grace than money management."

When he blessed the food that evening, Nathan prayed, "Thank you God that these calves ... are no longer our problem. Help our next venture be more successful." Over jambalaya, sliced tomatoes and string beans we talked about grace. We explained that just as Duane did not want or expect the children to pay for the calves and the feed, God does not want or expect us to pay for salvation. As I tucked her into bed that night, Christine prayed, "Thank you for what we learned ... about grace."

We Mennonites have learned important lessons about hard work and responsibility. Our churches teach us to serve God with all our hearts and all our might. We live in a free-market economy based on the assumption that more work equals more pay. But God's love calls us to operate under a new exchange rate in which more work does not equal more grace.

God does not love me because I am a good person or because I can cook or write or sing. God loves me for no good reason. That is grace.

Though that summer of our calves was long ago, the lesson about grace has never left me. I learned that God loves me and that salvation and everything else given me is a simple, generous gift.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

—Ephesians 2:8-9

Elaine Maust lives in Meridian, Miss. She and her husband are co-pastors of Jubilee Mennonite Church.

Hesston College names academic dean

HESSTON, Kan.—Marc Yoder, a Hesston College graduate and associate professor of education at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in Cedar Falls, has been named academic dean at Hesston College.

Yoder has been a member of the UNI faculty since 1971 and has served as faculty chair and on the school's collective bargaining team. He was named UNI Student Iowa State Education Association Professor of the Year in 1992.

Yoder holds a bachelor's degree from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. He and his wife, Vonna, are founding members of Cedar Falls Mennonite Church.

MCC web site clocks more than a million visits

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Central Committee's web site has had more than 1 million visits since it was started in April 1995.

The site averaged 46,000 visits per month in 1997, an increase of 30 percent from the year before. One visit does not necessarily equal one visitor. For example, one visitor may visit three sections of the site, which would be recorded as three visits.

The most popular parts of the site are stories and sections on justice issues such as capital punishment, crime, gun control, mediation and conflict resolution, domestic violence and racism. Among other sections ranking high are Africa, Ten Thousand Villages, volunteer listings and Mennonite Disaster Service.—*MCC News Service*

Bluffton College returning to semester system

BLUFFTON, Ohio—After more than 25 years since dropping it, Bluffton College will return to the semester system starting with the 1999-2000 calendar year.

The college was last on the semester system in the early 1970s. Since then, Bluffton has used the modular system and the quarter system. The new academic year will include two 16-week semesters and a May module of three weeks of classes.

"The faculty feels that the longer semester period will permit students to deal with topics with greater depth and breadth," says John Kampen, vice president and dean for academic affairs. "It will provide an opportunity for more significant research and writing projects."

Newton, Kan., Mennonite statue to be restored

NEWTON, Kan.—The *Mennonite Settler* statue, a fixture in Athletic Park since 1942 but eroded by the elements and damaged by vandals, will be restored, thanks to supporters and the city commission.

Cost of the project is $40,400, with about $10,000 coming from a local support group and the rest from the Newton City Commission. Restoration should be completed in about a year. Where the restored statue will be located is yet to be determined.

The statue, originally funded in part by the Depression-era Works Progress Administration, is a stylized depiction of a standing bearded male situated in a circular mosaic design representing the immigration of Mennonite settlers to the area.—*Newton Kansan*

EMU's MBA program to draw on religious values

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite University will start a master of business administration degree program in January 1999, geared to mid-career people in small and medium-sized businesses and organizations.

Unlike other MBA programs, says academic dean William J. Hawk, EMU's program will draw on Mennonite-Christian values such as community, service, integrity, stewardship, peace and justice. "It will incorporate EMU's emphases on ethics and cross-cultural learning," he says.

Goshen reports boost in international students

GOSHEN, Ind.—Eight new international students enrolled at Goshen College for the spring semester, bringing the total number on campus to 74, nearly 8 percent of the student body. The international students represent more than 30 countries.

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All VSers who were a part of the Kansas City, Missouri, unit at any time, and *all* Hesston College nurses who trained at General Hospital are encouraged to attend.

Events

Mennonite Economic Development Associates meeting of St. Joseph Valley and Michiana chapters, March 5, 6:30 p.m., Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind. Speakers: LeRoy Troyer and Terry Troyer on the Nazareth Project. Contact Boyd Nelson, 219-537-4334.

Mennonite Camping Association biennial meeting, March 26-29, Camp Arnes, Winnipeg.

The Giving Project Gathering, March 27-28, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan. Contact: The Giving Project, GivingProject@Prodigy.net, 219-296-6236.

Workers

Bartel, Barry and Brenda of Arvada, Colo., are starting five-year terms with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Bolivia as country representatives and program coordinators.

De la Rosa, Philip of Colorado Springs, Colo., is starting a two-year MCC assignment in Bolivia as a street children educator.

Frazier, Gloria of Philadelphia, is starting a two-year MCC assignment in Philadelphia as youth coordinator for New Mercies Mennonite Church.

Lehman, Sheryl of Lancaster, Pa., is starting a two-year MCC assignment in Akron, Pa., in MCC Financial Services.

Miller, Keith and Sofia Samatar of Madison, Wis., are starting three-year MCC assignments in Sudan as secondary school teachers.

Plank, Matthew of Rosemont, Pa., is starting a two-year MCC term in Bryn Mawr, Pa., as a Ten Thousand Villages store manager.

Reimer, William of Winnipeg, has been named director of MCC's Food, Disaster and Material Resources program.

Schultz, Ingrid will end a pastorate at Comunidad de Fe, Chicago, in April.

Versluis, Anna of Corvallis, Ore., is starting a three-year MCC assignment in Haiti as a peace worker and research associate.

Births

Albrecht, Rebecca, Jan. 24, to Heidi (Yoder) and Jay Albrecht, Middleport, N.Y.

Bender, Timothy Virgil and Tobyn Donovan (twins), Jan. 12, to Donovan and Karen (Ihms), Bender, Wellman, Iowa.

Benjamin, Jonathon Taylor, Nov. 18, to Denise (Riemenschneider) and Ian Benjamin, Rocky Ford, Colo.

Fisher, Douglas Neal, Oct. 25, to Anita (Gerber) and Jeff Fisher, Kidron, Ohio.

Geiser, Madeline Allott, Dec. 28, to Bruce and Julie (Bowman) Geiser, Canton, Ohio.

Gessinger, Bailey Drew, Jan. 18, to Brett and Kerri (Vander-Reyden) Gessinger, Goshen, Ind.

Hawkins, Abigail Jean, Jan. 26, to Cindy (Bontrager) and David Hawkins, Middlebury, Ind.

Keough, Matthew Gene, Jan. 20, adopted by Jack and Robin Keough, Clarence, N.Y.

Litwiller, Grace Elizabeth, Jan. 17, to Elizabeth (Meyer) and Mike Litwiller, Parnell, Iowa.

Miles, Kaitlin Annabelle, Jan. 24, to Brett and Laurie (Minick) Miles, Wayland, Iowa.

Miller, Aaron Wayne, Jan. 14, to Lester and Tamara (Riegsecker) Miller, Middlebury, Ind.

Sackett, Leanne Amber, Nov. 28, to Bill and Leonida (Echon) Sackett, Rocky Ford, Colo.

Stucky, Mallory Anne, Jan. 26, to Lisa (Kroeker) and Terry Stucky, Hutchinson, Kan.

Yoder, Micaela Christine, Jan. 18, to Cindy (Swartzendruber) and Tom Yoder, Goshen, Ind.

Zehr, Adriana Joy, Oct. 14, to Jennifer (Mahabier) and Stan Zehr, Sapporo, Japan.

Marriages

Kehr/Leaman: Jerry Kehr, Wakarusa, Ind., and Monica Leaman, Wakarusa, Jan. 24, by Wesley J. Bontreger.

Marker/McFarland: J. Dawn Marker, Keyser, W.Va., and Larry McFarland, Frostburg, Md., Aug. 18, by Everett J. Spence.

Martin/Mullenix: J. Randall Martin, Williamsport, Md., and Rebecca Mullenix, Hagerstown, Md., Jan. 3, by Chester E. Martin.

Mast/Miller: Norman Mast, Hart-ville, Ohio, and Lonita Miller, Avon, Ohio, Jan. 24, by Dave Hall and Henry Shrock.

Deaths

Kauffman, Vesta V. Johns, 89, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 26. Survivors: children Carolyn Mascarenas, Marcile Miller, Marybelle Beachy, Charles; 15 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 29 at Goshen by Robert Shreiner and Vernon Bontreger.

King, Cynthia May Bragg, 38, Bellefontaine, Ohio, died Jan. 9 of cancer. Survivors: husband, James R.; children Stacey, Andrew, Matthew, Holly, Katie, Jonathan; parents, Roy L. and Betty Bragg. Burial: Jan. 15 at West Liberty by Alvin Yoder.

King, Loren S., 91, West Liberty, Ohio, died Jan. 15. Survivors: wife, Dorothy; children Beverly Stoltzfus, David, Linda Hostetler, Dwight, Mary Eleanor Boldman, Alvin J.; 13 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 18 at West Liberty by Alvin Yoder.

King, Willard, 82, Wauseon, Ohio, died Jan. 17 of cerebral hemorrhage. Survivors: wife, Grace; children Charlene VanPelt, Judy Selzer, Dan; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 20 at Wauseon by Rick Jones and Dale Wyse.

Lehman, Paul Daniel, 57, Mount Eaton, Ohio, died Dec. 9 of heart failure. Survivors: children Bryan, Brent; parents, Willis and Sarean Lehman. Burial: Dec. 12 at Kidron by Sanford Oyer and Ralph Reinford.

Moyer, Elizabeth Yothers, 90, Lansdale, Pa., died Jan. 22 of pneumonia. Survivors: children Ruth Swartley, Mary Gehman, Anne Marie; nine grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 27 at Blooming Glen by David A. Stevens and Truman H. Brunk.

Schantz, Esther, 88, Beemer, Neb., died Jan. 8. Burial: Jan. 10 at Beemer by Roger Hazen.

Schlegel, Rebecca, 81, Rocky Ford, Colo., died Oct. 7 of cardiac arrest. Burial: Oct. 10 at Rocky Ford by John Zimmerman.

Stamm, Vesta Miller, 77, Tedrow, Ohio, died Jan. 8. Survivors: husband, Harold; children Anda, Jan; six grandchildren. Burial: Jan 12 at Wauseon by Randall Nafziger.

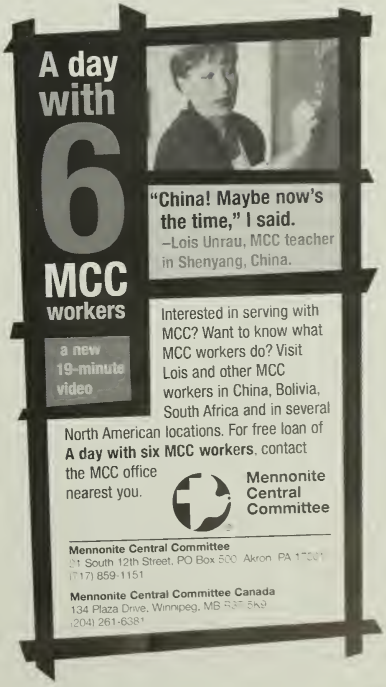
Tovey, Echo Royal Morrison, 82, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 22. Survivors: husband, Paul; children Janice Roberts, Karen Vollmer; four grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 25 at Toledo by Dee Swartz and Ron Guengerich.

Wyse, Dora Short, 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 25. Survivors: husband, Monroe B.; children Paul, John Mark, Grace Laffon, Rosalie Derstine. Burial: Jan. 28 at Harrisonburg by Randall Shull, Myron Augsburger and Dan Longenecker.

Walter, Elizabeth Hess, 92, Willow Street, Pa., died Jan 18. Burial: Jan. 24 at New Providence by Richard Frank and Walter Hurst.

Yoder, Orva M., 81, LaGrange, Ind., died Jan. 20. Survivors: children Carolyn Mae Troyer, June Elain Kennell, Ruth Darlene Kreitzman; four grandchildren; Burial: Jan. 23 at Shipshewana by Richard Martin and Jerry Rodman.

Ziegler, Kathryn Yoder, 77, Perkasie, Pa., died Jan. 24. Survivors: husband, Paul K.; daughter, Shirley A. Frankenfield; eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 27 at Blooming Glen by Truman H. Brunk, Benjamin S. Stutzman and Michael Derstine.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Classifieds

Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa., pilots' retreat, April 17-19: You don't need to be a pilot to attend, but the sight and sound of airplanes should excite you! Moderator is Ken Stoltzfus, Applecreek, Ohio. Speaker is Skip Holmberg of JAARS. Concert of traditional folk music by Daybreak. For reservations call 800-822-7505.

Bethany Ministries Retreat Center: Hospitality people, couple or singles needed. Responsibilities include cooking, housekeeping, maintenance and gardening. Young enough to do physical work in hot, humid weather. Accommodation and food provided. Contact Ike Thomas at Bethany Ministries Retreat Center in Hong Kong; tel. 852-2981-7114; fax 852-2981-5047; email bethany@hk.super.net.

Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, Man., invites applications for the full-time position of assistant pastor to begin August 1998. Responsibilities: Primary focus shall be given to ministry with junior and senior youth and young adults. Other areas include some preaching, worship leadership and pastoral care.

Qualifications: Strong commitment to Anabaptist Christian beliefs. Abilities in leadership, program direction, teaching, teamwork and motivation are essential. Some theological training preferred. Application deadline: March 15. Direct inquiries to: Helen Goerzen, search committee chair, c/o Grace Mennonite Church, Box 508, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0; 204-326-3707; fax 204-346-0176; email grace2u@ccco.mb.ca. More information about our church is available at our web site: http://www.ccco.net/~grace2u/.

Trinity Mennonite Church & First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, Kan., seek a full-time youth pastor beginning this summer. The person will lead the combined youth group and reach out to unchurched youth. Additional ministry opportunities are also available depending on the gifts and interests of the candidate. Contact Keith Harder at 316-947-5662 or Steve Conrad at 316-947-3824 for more information.

Mennonite Home of Albany: Part-time chaplain for retirement community. Responsibilities include daily devotions, worship services, resident and family counseling, memorial services. Will work mainly with nursing and Alzheimer's residents. Qualifications: member of a Mennonite church, college degree, one year clinical pastoral education. Send resume, CPE evaluation and statement of theology to Donna BreMiller, Mennonite Home of Albany, 5353 Columbus SE, Albany, OR 97321; 541-928-7232.

Bethany Birches Camp has the following summer positions open June 28 to August 21: counselors, cook and assistant cook, assistant program director, lifeguard, nurse, maintenance leader and kitchen assistants. Contact Bethany Birches Camp, P.O. Box 257, Plymouth, VT 05056; 802-672-3959.

Eastern Mennonite University seeks a director of multicultural programs, a 10-month, full-time position. Master's degree in the field of human services or bachelor's degree and three years of applicable experience. Provides leadership to the multicultural program that is affirming and supportive of the diverse racial and cultural backgrounds represented within the university. Commitment to multicultural issues, skills in mediation, interpersonal and group communication and administrative competence. Supervises international student adviser. Multiethnic people and women are especially encouraged to apply. If interested, please contact the EMU Human Resources Office at 540-432-4108 or e-mail ebybj@emu.edu.

Bluffton College announces two full-time, tenure-track positions in education beginning September 1998. Rank dependent on qualifications; doctorate preferred.

Position 1: The successful candidate will hold a certification in middle / secondary education, with major field of study in English, social sciences or health / physical education preferred. Evidence of effective teaching crucial. Required minimum of three years teaching at the middle / secondary level, more than the minimum preferred; graduate-level teaching experience preferred. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate and graduate education courses in foundations, adolescent development, classroom organization and teaching methodology, as well as placement and supervision of student teachers and academic advising of students in teacher education.

Position 2: The successful candidate will hold certification in special education / elementary or middle school education, with reading / language arts concentration preferred. Evidence of effective teaching crucial. Required minimum of three years of teaching in each area of certification, special education and elementary / middle school; graduate-level teaching experience preferred; successful experience in team teaching is desirable. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in foundations of special education, reading, curriculum methods and classroom organization, as well as placement and supervision of student teachers and academic advising of students in teacher education.

Consideration of applications begins March 2 and continues until appointments are made. Additional information: http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac. Send letter of interest, resume or vita, three letters of reference and official transcripts to Amy Tabler, assistant to the VP and dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. EOE.

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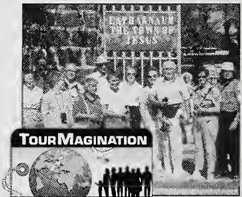
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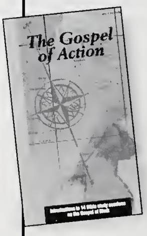

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by James W. Hanes

Make missions the priority of our giving

What are Mennonite churches doing with their money? I wondered that as I heard Pastor Hailu Cherinet of Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia addressing the congregation at Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va. His subject was missions. While he did not mention how much money Mennonite churches in the United States gave to missions, I wanted to find out how much we are giving and the potential we have for greater giving. I wondered if we were hoarding some of the wealth God had given us.

Are a large number of Mennonite churches across the country sitting on gold mines? Theirs is not the wealth of talented musicians, theologians or scholars but of accumulated and unused money. We seem willing to proclaim to the world how much we donate to God's kingdom work, but what about the stores that lie untapped in our local church bank accounts, CDs and mutual funds? We require mission boards to supply this information, yet many local congregations are not required or would not consent to allowing someone to publish the amount of liquid assets they possess and how long they have been retained.

There is always much to be done in our local congregations, such as building, remodeling, property acquisitions and other projects that require large sums of money. Having resources available for these intentions represents valid foresight. Yet how long are we waiting to act on these plans? Where does prudence stop and greed or reliance on worldly security begin?

I am aware of Mennonite congregations in other parts of the world struggling with and becoming victorious over this carnal need to build up wealth. As committees and subcommittees dream, wait and listen to God, they realize that in order to fulfill God's desires, money will need to be raised and spent. There is nothing wrong with local churches having surplus cash as long as they have a vision or goal for these funds and are ready, willing and have a plan to act upon them.

Look, for instance, at Lin Shen Road Mennonite Church in Taichung, Taiwan. It is now referred to as the "Mennonite monument of Taichung." It has 12 stories, a swimming pool in the basement, facilities for a kindergarten, daycare, seniors program, a large kitchen and dining room, library, hostels and apartment for the pastor and family. Lin Shen Road Church not only meets the needs of its members but especially the community.

It is also important to learn how the money for the church was raised. The vision from God came first, followed by the money. The cost of this monolith was $5 million. The General Conference Mennonite Church's Church Extension Services provided a generous $450,000 start-up loan to be repaid in 10 years. Within two short years the loan was repaid. Membership at Lin Shen in 1994 was between 90 and 100. How these people raised that enormous sum of money is amazing. Members took out personal loans, sold jewelry and personal property and placed the money at the feet of the leaders (sound familiar?), then made the building of this structure a priority.

Where does prudence stop and greed or reliance on worldly security begin?

Most non-U.S. churches have similar accounts of how God used their faith and God's resources to meet the needs of members and the community. Take a look at Pastor Cherinet's church in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

On that cool March morning at Immanuel Mennonite Church, Pastor Cherinet said several times, "Live churches are characterized by giving missions top priority." He displayed Meserete Kristos' budget for all to see that morning. How many of us would be so bold? Their budget is simple. Sixty percent goes to mission, 25 percent to local expenses, including administrative costs of the church itself, and 15 percent to conference expenses. They have little or no surplus money on hand. Most Christians would say that this budget is a tremendous accomplishment considering the growth and success of the congregation. Meserete Kristos and its sister churches are the fastest-growing churches in this part of the world.

Mark Vincent, author of the pamphlets *A Christian View of Money* and *Teaching a Christian View of Money*, suggests a church keep seven to 10 percent of its annual expected income in a cash reserve to help it manage cash flow and follow through on plans for the year, whether there is a shortfall or not. They can use the next program year to build back their reserve after a year with a shortfall.

Not all U.S. Mennonite congregations are steeped in the controversial position of hoarding wealth. But enough are in this trap for us to become concerned, for who knows when God will demand that we share our wealth and expose these gold mines that we call security?

James W. Hanes lives in Harrisonburg, Va.

From its inception in 1948 until 1982, the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia had 14 churches and 5,000 members. Then in 1992, they increased to 53 churches and 51,591 members. As of 1996, they reported 140 churches and 104,000 members. Pastor Hailu Cherinet attributes the growth to God's providence through persecution and "giving missions top priority."

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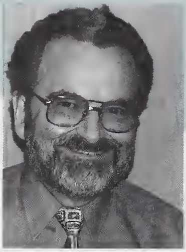


by J. Lorne Peachey

When the winds blow and the waves roar . . .

I've thought a lot about Peter recently—Peter, that impulsive, impetuous, act-and-then-think disciple who was never quite sure what he was up to. Like Peter in Matthew 14:23-33, about a year ago I too was invited to get out of my comfortable boat into a vast unknown. My summons came from a group deciding how to merge the publications of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church. "Would you plan and edit this new publication?" I was asked.

To have a role in the new, integrated church; to be able to do what for me is the most energizing and fulfilling work I know, creating something new; and to be able to do all this for the church—all this "has to be a church journalist's dream," as a colleague put it. If it wasn't exactly walking on water, it surely was a close second!

But I'll never forget the Monday morning when, like Peter, I first noticed the winds and saw the waves. I was beginning to learn fast that no one wanted to give up their traditions, even in a publication. Jobs were on the line. And people were looking to me to make decisions, so much so I was tempted to send out a form letter that said simply, "I wish I knew!" For a half day I sputtered, unable to move. "God," I remember praying, "I can't do this. Help me. I'm sinking."

Then I saw the hand, faint at first, to be sure. It came first as an email from a friend saying he was thinking of me. Then there was a letter from a Sunday school class pledging prayer for the new publication. By the time I got two or three phone calls wishing me well, I knew I was firmly in God's hands.

And I grasped God's hands. Not that the winds ceased immediately, as they did for Peter. But I know there's one with me who knows how to cope with these winds. With that, I will move on in faith.—*jlp*

. . . Jesus continues to say, 'Peace! Be still!'

Mine is just a small detail in a significant change which faces our church these days. When the delegates at Wichita 95 voted to merge, the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) took a step out of their boats.

I'll never forget the first joint worship service after the GCs voted by 93 percent and the MCs by 73 percent to integrate. "Here in this place, new light is streaming" (*Hymnal:A Worship Book* 6), we sang in the Wichita, Kan., convention center. "See in this space, our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day."

Today we realize we will have to give up some of what we cherish—and adopt some of what we're not sure about.

That euphoria carried us through the next months as people in various structures began to talk about how to work together. Today, every churchwide meeting I attend has integration as a major part, if not the only part, of the agenda.

But lately some of us also feel the winds and see the waves. It may have happened first in estimates that this could cost us anywhere from a half to a full million dollars—a figure I've heard whispered recently. We're also beginning to realize how difficult it is to blend two church traditions. To date we've believed we could hold to our own and just adopt the best of the other. Now we're realizing that we all will have to give up some of what we cherish—and adopt some of what we're not sure about.

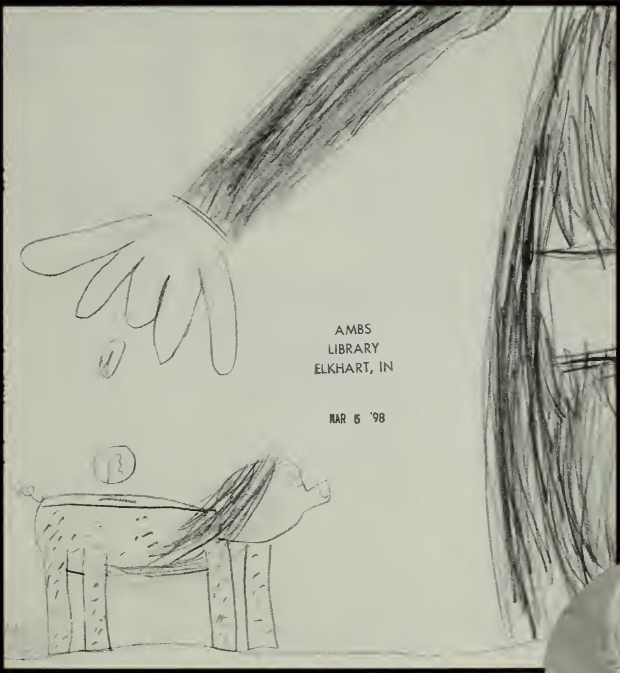
So the discussions become intense: Will the new Mennonite Church be an association of congregations or area conferences? Who will decide what to do about such knotty problems as homosexuality and military personnel and church membership? Who will be our new leaders, and can we trust them?

Help us, Lord. We're sinking.

Once again we must remember that the invitation to get out of our boat was genuine. The votes at Wichita 95 to merge were not as high as they were because delegates weren't paying attention. This was reaffirmed at Winnipeg and Orlando last summer when both GC and MC delegates overwhelmingly adopted plans for merger—including this publication.

Jesus invites us again to take his hand. The one who invited us to take this step of faith will be with us, either to silence the winds or to walk beside us as the waves continue to billow.—*jlp*

the Mennonite
March 3, 1998



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change in news about giving

4 Increased income for church institutions
5 South African CO's testimony
8 A faithful teacher in the church
10 Be scattered and bless all the earth

T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Living better on less

I lived well in 1997 on less than $5,000. For more than nine years I have lived in my pleasant 10-foot by 12-foot room, plus closet and bath. I rarely eat a meal in restaurant; I have much healthier food for less money at home. I enjoy the simple pleasures of life: health, nature, exercise, music, reading, sunbathing, friendship and deep conversation.

To live better on much less money, pay cash for everything if possible; buy used; sell or give away what you do not need; walk, bike or ride the bus; eat only natural, vegetarian foods at home; use the library; attend worthwhile free events; make gifts; get rid of your car and TV.

I would not trade places with anyone living on $50,000 or $5 million a year. I would be sorely ashamed to hog much more than I need while millions suffer on far less than they need.—*Don Schrader, Albuquerque, N.M.*

Bottom-up fellowship

Congratulations on vol. 1, no. 1. *The Mennonite* is appealing and attractive. It feels "integrated." The editor and staff should feel very pleased. You say that you managed to create the new periodical in six months. Maybe you have some insights to speed up the rest of the integration process.

I'm concerned about the report that the Integration Committee has decided that the U.S. general board "should not be chosen first by the area conferences and church organizations but by gender, race and historical General Conference Mennonite Church or Mennonite Church background" (*The Mennonite,* Feb. 17). Does this really fit a biblical or Mennonite ecclessiology? Or theology?

I understand the church to be a fellowship of the Holy Spirit, led by members gifted by the Spirit who are first identified in the local congregation. Gender, race and history are important but subsidiary considerations. We strive for the great goal of Galatians 3:28—neither male nor female, etc.—but such a reality begins in congregations and conferences. Are not both GC and MC traditions bottom up rather than top down? Does that not mean we affirm spiritual direction and local decision with some diversity in the process of choosing people for the general board?

It also seems to me that to ignore geographical location and numerical size will only weaken a board that is supposed to serve a national body. Unless the process and the individuals selected are owned by the peoplehood at the base, the general board will be weak and ineffective.—*John A. Lapp, Akron, Pa.*

First responses

This morning I had the latest issue of *Canadian Mennonite* alongside the new *The Mennonite.* Reflecting on the point of view each provides, I now understand a bit more why the integrated Mennonite Church needs two editorial voices in North America.

Canadian Mennonite provides immensely helpful windows into the Canadian milieu. As I savored every page in *The Mennonite,* I was also thrilled at the leadership this resource will provide for all of us in the United States and Puerto Rico. Those who have worked so diligently the last months to produce this new creation have given us a credible and inspiring new resource. Its style and substance exceeded my expectations. Congratulations!

With both magazines side by side, I finally get it: We need both points of view. I encourage all members of the future integrated Mennonite Church to subscribe to both periodicals. Doing so and reading them regularly will help us understand each other much better.—*Everett J. Thomas, president, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Elkhart, Ind.*

The Mennonite, vol. 1, no. 1, has just arrived in the library. It is visually pleasing, although I don't care for the lowercase and running together of the words in the title. As a librarian, I was happy to see that you are using a paper of good quality. I'm also glad to see the substantial section of announcements, especially the deaths.—*Ann Hilty, librarian, Mennonite Historical Library, Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio*

What excitement you must feel at a fresh creation. This is a new day, and may there be many more where we feel drawn to our diversity rather than isolated by it. Thank you for the hard work and spirit of this issue.

For the over-50 crowd, the sans serif type in smaller point sizes is deadly, such as the classified advertising section. Thanks for a lively, yet uncluttered design.—*Mary Lou Weaver Houser, Lancaster, Pa.*

Congratulations on the first issue of the new *The Mennonite.* It is excellent in all respects. Thanks to editor J. Lorne Peachey, the associate editors and all the staff. I appreciated the editorials, Gordon Houser's Mediaculture column, the articles, news and poems.

One suggestion: Include a sentence identifying the authors of the poems as was done for the authors of the articles.—*Laura H. Weaver, Evansville, Ind.*

theMennonite

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The influence of this Mennonite theologian touches many.

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say readers say

As a longtime reader of both *Gospel Herald* and the previous *The Mennonite*, I read the first issue of the new *The Mennonite* with considerable anticipation and excitement. I applaud its marks of newness, of creativity, its attention to the integration processes and problems and the generally wide and balanced coverage. I missed the inspiring Bible-based opening feature article I appreciated so much in *Gospel Herald* and equally the "No other foundation" slogan of Menno Simons (1 Corinthians 3:11) I have associated with the cover of the former *The Mennonite* for as long as I read it. Readers Say tends to dramatize our differences rather than build our common ground in Christ. I would keep the column but not in the lead position.—*Erland Waltner, Elkhart, Ind.*

Congo crisis contributions

I read with interest Carol Shearon's letter and her plea to assist the Mennonite church in Congo (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 17). In January I returned from a two-week trip to Congo, where I visited with Mennonite church leaders and members, our partners in Congo. The church in Congo, begun in 1912 by Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) missionaries, has suffered much in the past year with the change of government. The crisis affected the Mennonite church there and continues to impede its ability to sustain current work and ministries as well as to respond to emergency needs. They need our prayers and financial support.

AIMM has set up a fund to respond to the needs of Mennonites in Congo as a result of the crisis. Thank you for caring.—*Garry Prieb, executive secretary, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Elkhart, Ind.*

Increased EMM, GC income shows changes in financial support of church institutions

In 1997, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) set a record for contributions, while the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) exceeded its budget for the second consecutive year, apparently countering the conventional wisdom that more money is staying home for local needs.

But the EMM and GC reports also highlight the trends and vagaries of how church institutions are now financially supported.

Although it fell $137,000 short of budget, EMM, the mission agency of Lancaster Conference, had an all-time high of $6.4 million in contributions for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 1997, breaking a four-year lull in giving. After receiving $6.2 million in 1992, EMM did not bring in more than $5.9 million until last year.

EMM finance director Millard Garrett says the agency's constituency is more optimistic financially. "There's less unemployment; markets are good for those in business," he says. "People continue to have a vision for what God wants to do in the world and [they] want to invest in that."

A large part of the increase in giving follows a trend seen by institutions across the church: constituents financially supporting specific workers or programs, thereby making direct links to the agency's outreach efforts. Such support accounted for 24 percent of EMM's 1997 income, up more than 8 percent since 1994. The agency's 1998 budget is $6.6 million, of which nearly 26 percent is to come for specific causes. The biggest recipients are EMM's overseas work and Discipleship Ministries, including Youth Evangelism Service.

Such giving, Garrett says, is "the growing edge."

EMM calls it "flex" for flexible. If not enough money is received to send specific individuals or fund specific ministries, they are eliminated, Garrett says. That means other areas of EMM do not have to make across-the-board budget cuts to compensate.

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

Juan Carlos Casanova, a Bolivian participating in Eastern Mennonite Mission's Youth Evangelism Service , reads to Debbie Soler (left) and Jocelyn Guayabo at a kids' club in Harrisburg, Pa. All YES participants have to bring their financial support with them. Such direct support of specific individuals and ministries, both overseas and at home, is a growing trend at EMM.

Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) budgets and income, 1993-1997

		EMM	GC
1993	budget	$6.73 million	$4.97 million
	income	$5.93 million	$4.62 million
	% of budget	88.1%	92.9%
1994	budget	$6.07 million	$4.68 million
	income	$5.76 million	$4.33 million
	% of budget	94.9%	92.6%
1995	budget	$6.48 million	$4.45 million
	income	$5.94 million	$4.31 million
	% of budget	91.6%	96.6%
1996	budget	$6.03 million	$4.27 million
	income	$5.92 million	$4.39 million
	% of budget	98.1%	102.8%
1997	budget	$6.55 million	$4.18 million
	income	$6.41 million	$4.50 million
	% of budget	97.9%	107.6%

Meanwhile, the General Conference Mennonite Church received $4.5 million last year, or more than 107 percent of its $4.2 million budget, in large part due to estates. Estate income in 1997 was unexpectedly up $100,000 over the year before.

GC business manager and treasurer Ted Stuckey calls last year's estate receipts a welcome windfall that affirms the work of the church's planned-giving people. "You plan for [estate gifts] by talking to people and 15 or 20 years later gathering the fruits of that," he says. "You never know when people are going to pass away."

Each estate gift is distributed equally over five fiscal years after it is received. Because of the upcoming allotments, the 1998 GC budget will be about 5 percent higher than 1997, Stuckey says—the first increased since 1992.

"We're really taking our cues from what our congregations are giving us," Stuckey says.

The church also topped its budget in 1996. The last time that happened in consecutive years was 1979 and 1980.

About 75 percent of GC budgeted income comes from congregations, 15 percent from individuals and the rest from estates and interest.—*Rich Preheim with EMM and GCMC News Services*

War, peace, nonresistance in South Africa

MCC-donated literature helped shape CO's beliefs

AKRON, Pa.—In testimony to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), former prisoner of conscience Richard Steele credited Mennonite belief and Mennonite writers for helping shape his peace views.

Steele described to the TRC his conversion to pacifism and conscientious objection (CO). Following the 1976 student uprising against apartheid, he began reading the Bible and works on peace by Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder and others. Steele refused military service when drafted in 1980. South Africa had no provisions for COs other than noncombatant service in the military, which he opposed as contributing to war's aims and violence.

Steele recently sent a copy of his TRC testimony and a letter to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) headquarters.

Following his court-martial, Steele was sentenced to 18 months in detention and to repeated stints in solitary confinement for refusing to wear a military uniform or participate in drills. He eventually was granted de facto CO status, granted permission to work in the prison gardens and housed with Jehovah's Witnesses also imprisoned for military nonparticipation.

"When I first began to consider pacifism, nonviolence and conscientious objection, Peace Shelf books donated by MCC [see sidebar] were very helpful in developing my thoughts and planning my actions," Steele wrote.

He found the books in the University of Cape Town library. Steele said the first book he read "and which made the most impact" was Guy F. Hershberger's *War, Peace and Nonresistance.*

At his court-martial, he said, "the central tenet of my defense [was] lifted straight from Mennonite literature."

Steele was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. Other organizations including MCC supported him and campaigned for South African recognition of CO status.

Through the 1980s and early '90s, Steele was a peace worker and nonviolence trainer employed by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. For much of that time, MCC contributed an annual grant to support his work with IFOR. During the 1982-83 academic year, Steele took classes at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Today he is studying homeopathic medicine in Durban, South Africa.—*Ardell Stauffer for MCC News Service*

Since the early 1970s the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Peace Office has sent 405 copies of the Peace Library (also known as the Peace Shelf) to 85 countries. The set of books in English includes 15 titles on Mennonite peace theology; Mennonite, Quaker and Brethren experience in international peace work; and other peace literature. Collections of peace books in French, Spanish and German are also available.

Peace Libraries are generally sent only to locations outside North America and are to be housed in places accessible to the public. Recent requests have come from Congo and Swaziland, says Judy Zimmerman Herr of MCC Peace Office.
—Ardell Stauffer for MCC News Service

10 evangelists commissioned to promote peace

SOUTH BEND, Ind.—The old-time concept of the itinerant evangelist is being revived to encourage and nurture the peace position among Mennonites.

Ten peace evangelists were commissioned Jan. 24 at Kern Road Mennonite Church. They will speak in congregations, at conferences and at community events throughout North America and Puerto Rico.

"Congregations are saying, 'Don't send us paper; send us a person who can understand us and understand our lives,' " says Susan Mark Landis of the Mennonite Church (MC) Peace and Justice Committee. "People are interested in peace, but they're not excited about it. We're using dynamic speakers who will foster a passion in the people for peace."

The 10 commissioned peace evangelists are: Michael and Addie Banks of Bronx, N.Y.; Ray and Marilyn Houser Hamm of Altona, Man.; Lawrence Hart of Clinton, Okla.; Jonathan Larson of Atlanta; Bek Linsenmeyer of Inman, Kan.; Gilberto Perez of Aibonito, Puerto Rico; Luzdy Stucky of Tucson, Ariz.; and Derek Suderman of Waterloo, Ont.

Primary sponsoring bodies are the MC Peace and Justice Committee and the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM). Additional support comes from Mennonite Board of Missions, Mennonite Central Committee and the MC General Board.

"We must pursue those who are hurting others and show them God's love through action, not merely words," Perez says.

Doug Krehbiel of CHM's Peace and Justice Resources, worries about the church losing its peace emphasis. "We need to keep that heritage strong," he says. "It's the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Prince of Peace. We need to take that message to the world."

The peace evangelists will serve until the joint General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church convention in St. Louis in 1999. They succeed Ann and Paul Gingrich, who served as peace evangelists for two years before retiring last year. *—Christy Risser of MBM News Service*

Photo by Christy Risser

Peter Rempel (left), executive director of the Council of International Ministries, presents a gift to Jacob Kikkert of the Dutch Mennonite mission agency Doopsgezinde Zendingrad (DZR) in commemoration of the organization's 150th anniversary. Kikkert attended CIM's annual consultation Jan. 23-26 in Chicago. The DZR was founded in 1847 and sent its first workers four years later to Java (part of Indonesia).

Mission agencies address Hinduism

CHICAGO—North American Mennonite overseas mission agencies have agreed to "present Jesus, not Christian religion" in their encounters with Hindus.

About 60 people attended the annual Council of International Ministries consultation Jan. 23-26, which this year focused on Hinduism. CIM is an association of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ mission and service agencies.

J.P. Masih, assistant secretary for the Evangelical Fellowship of India and pastor of a Mennonite congregation in Korba, told the gathering that Hindus believe "the Western audience is open to them."

"Now is the time to let the younger generation that is open . . . know the truth," he said.—*Christy Risser and Peter Rempel*

MCC administrator makes visit to Iran

TEHRAN, Iran—A five-person U.S. delegation, including a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) administrator, visited Iran Feb. 3-11 to strengthen relations between the two countries.

J. Daryl Byler, director of the MCC U.S. Washington Office, was a member of a delegation from Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), a coalition of 15 church groups, including MCC, that works in Washington for fair U.S. policies in the Middle East. The purpose of the trip was to improve CMEP's ability to do education and advocacy work in the United States.

The group visited with political and Islamic leaders to discuss the status of U.S.-Iranian relations. The delegation also visited with leaders of the evangelical and Armenian Orthodox churches in the country.

Following Iranian President Mohammed Khatami's call for dialogue between civilizations, the U.S. delegation shared a written greeting saying, "We can no longer be strangers in a world made smaller by television and mass communication."

The message continued: "Because of our faith, we do not always agree with or support what the United States has done or is doing in . . . the Persian Gulf region."

Other delegation members included representatives from Lutheran and Presbyterian organizations.—*MCC News Service*

MDS annual meeting highlights work, change

CALGARY—Mennonite Disaster Service is known for its work in the wake of destruction. But in 1997, MDS also did some destroying.

Following a tornado that tore through the poor and racially mixed community of College Station, Ark., MDS cleaned and rebuilt. And in doing so, it also helped break down walls of racism.

In his report to the MDS annual all-unit meeting Feb. 12-13, Region III director Vernon Miller quoted College Station pastor Hezekiah Stewart, who said, "Until the Mennonites came here, we hated whites. God brought this storm here, and now we [blacks and whites] are workers together with God."

The all-unit meeting brought 335 people to Dalhousie Mennonite Brethren Church to fellowship, worship, reflect and plan. This year's theme was "Building Community."

"To build community, we need good givers, good receivers and God's Spirit, which is necessary to capture generosity and willingness and preserve it for when needs aren't visible," said keynote speaker Jerry Buhler, an Alberta pastor.

The 1998 meeting also marked a change in MDS leadership as Lowell Detweiler steps down after 12 years as executive coordinator. He will be succeeded by Tom Smucker, who has been assistant coordinator, based out of Smithville, Ohio. Smucker and his wife will move to MDS headquarters in Akron, Pa., later this year. Detweiler will continue to work with MDS, preparing the organization's 50th anniversary activities.—*Marisa Doncevic for MCC News Service*

International partnership assisting growing indigenous church in Ecuador

ELKHART, Ind.—In the Andean mountains of Ecuador, a partnership involving North American Mennonites, Colombian Mennonites and Ecuadoran Anabaptists is emerging to support a rapidly growing church among indigenous people.

This multinational partnership has come together to work at theological education of the Quichua Indians, the largest indigenous group in Ecuador, and to work with training and leadership development in the new and growing Mennonite church in Quito.

The project is the work of a reference group made up of representatives from the Iowa-Nebraska Conference, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), Commission on Overseas Mission (COM), Colombian Mennonite Conference, Center for Indian Theological Training in Ecuador and MAPCE, a Latin American Christian health and development association.

Nearly 3 million in number, the Quichua have been oppressed by rich landowners, governments and the church since the 16th century. In the mid-1960s, land reform came to Ecuador, and the Quichua obtained better economic and political standing. This led to previously unknown growth in Christian faith among the Indians. By 1993, the Federation of Indigenous Evangelicals of Ecuador had grown to 60,000 believers.

This rapid growth in churches has put tremendous demands on current church leaders and created an immediate need for more trained leaders to pastor new and growing congregations. The reference group has been created to provide training for pastors and leaders. The group is looking for instructors at the Center for Indian Theological Training.

"We're looking for someone who has experience in a wide variety of areas: mediation, church development and planting, seminary—and they must already be able to speak Spanish," says Greg Rake, who directs the Latin America programs for MBM and COM. "We had a candidate, but that fell through, and thus far, no one else has come forward."

More and more, North American mission agencies are joining Christians in other countries to open new fields.

"This kind of international partnership is vital to the continued growth of the church throughout Latin America and the world," Rake says. "It allows North Americans to gain a new perspective on what mission work can be all about. And it allows churches with less financial resources to join with those that have the resources and make a tangible contribution to the work of spreading God's word throughout the world."—*Christy Risser for MBM and GCMC News Services*

This kind of international partnership is vital to the continued growth of the church.

—Greg Rake

St. Louis 99 invites GCs, MCs to the river

ST. LOUIS—On the banks of the mighty Mississippi River, Mennonite adults and youth are called to gather in 1999 for the fourth joint convention of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC).

The adult and youth convention planning committees have selected "Come to the River" as the theme for St. Louis 99, set for July 23-27. The verses for the convention theme are Revelation 22:1-2 and 17, which speak of "the river as the water of life" and the invitation to all to "take the water of life as a gift."

The theme is "both an invitation for us to come and reminder that we must invite others to come," says planning committee member Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau of Goshen, Ind.

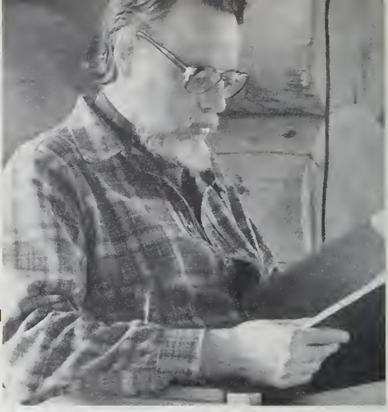
The committee visited St. Louis last month to make plans for the convention, which will be held in the America's Center convention complex.

St. Louis 99 could be the last meeting of delegate bodies of the General Conference Mennonite Church and current Mennonite Church. Delegates are expected to take action on proposals to formalize the impending GC-MC merger.

St. Louis is home to three Anabaptist congregations: St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship, Redeemer of the World Evangelical Church and Bethesda Mennonite Church.

America's Center in St. Louis, site of the 1999 joint General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church convention.

A faithful teacher in the church


Allan Siebert, courtesy of *Canadian Mennonite*

The Mennonite teacher and scholar leading a Bible study in 1984.

by Ted Grimsrud

Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder, who died on Dec. 30, 1997, influenced many people's thinking, including the author's.

John Howard Yoder influenced me tremendously. My membership in the Mennonite church; my vocation as a theologian, pastor and college professor; and my commitment to being Christian owe much to Yoder.

He was the first Mennonite writer I read—in fact, one of the first Mennonites I heard of.

In the spring of 1976, my last year of college, I made a personal decision to embrace pacifism. Hours spent soul-searching, talking with friends and reading the Bible culminated in an emotional, prayerful evening of clarity about my certainty that I could not participate in warfare—and a sense that this new commitment was going to be central to my entire understanding of my faith.

That summer, one of my friends took a class from Yoder—on Christian pacifism. My friend came back fired up and remarkably coherent in his theology of peacemaking. My friend also came back with three of Yoder's books: *Nevertheless: Varieties of Christian Pacifism, The Original Revolution* and *The Politics of Jesus.*

We spent hours talking, joined by a third friend equally interested in these issues—my wife-to-be, Kathleen Temple. I was a sponge ready to soak up all Yoder had to teach me about Jesus, peacemaking, the Christian tradition, the biblical message of love even for enemies and the Anabaptist alternative to pro-war Christendom.

The next several years were a time for me to consolidate my new awareness and gradually expand it. Kathleen and I learned to know Mennonites in our small Eugene, Ore., church. We read as much as we could.

The books and articles, the people, the ideas—we found ourselves increasingly drawn to Mennonitism. I also found myself wanting more formal education. We didn't know anything about theological schools, except that Yoder taught at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind.

In August 1980, we boarded a train from Portland, Ore., to Elkhart. It turned out to be a life-changing trip. We found a spiritual and intellectual home.

My two classes with Yoder, "Christian Attitudes Toward War, Peace and Revolution" and "Christology and Theological Method," were fascinating. In both classes, students received a set of mimeographed lectures that had been taped and transcribed. What a gold mine! (AMBS later edited and published both sets.) In "Christian Attitudes," Yoder taught us several wonderful peace hymns, and we began each class singing one. He had a powerful voice. I liked to sit directly in front of him in chapel and pretend I was singing out strongly.

Frightened student: Unfortunately, I found it difficult to connect with John personally. He told us he welcomed office visits. It was true that when he was in his office the door was always open. He did want to be hospitable and available for students. However, when I screwed up my courage to talk with him, it turned out to be an ordeal. He never seemed comfortable, which made this frightened student more afraid. His answers were short, his questions few. After two tries, I gave up.

A friend of mine worked harder. However, he also never quite succeeded in developing a close relationship. He gave up after he loaned John the joke book *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche*. John returned the book with a terse, "I fail to see the humor in this."

My respect for Yoder's work increased even more during the mid-1980s, when I completed a doctoral program in Christian ethics at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif. My school was a consortium of several Protestant and Catholic seminaries. Just about all the schools used *The Politics of Jesus* as a basic text in their ethics classes for men and women training for the ministry. These students read Yoder's book with great appreciation.

Numerous theologians, most notably James McClendon (who taught at my school) and Stanley Hauerwas, cited Yoder as one of their major influences. Another of my professors, Robert Bellah, a prominent sociologist of religion, expressed to me in conversation his great respect for Yoder's work.

Kathleen and I spent the spring semester of 1992 on sabbatical at AMBS. While we were there, accusations toward Yoder concerning sexual misconduct became public.

Like many others, I was shocked and struggled to make sense of it all. It was and remains difficult to hold together the profundity of Yoder's peace theology with the allegations of pain and trauma inflicted by his actions toward numerous women.

Ultimately, though, I believe that Yoder's positive contribution to my life, the life of the Mennonite church and the life of the broader Christian church remains. His witness was compromised by his transgressions. However, we are reminded by the Apostle Paul that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Many of our great heroes have had feet of clay.

In January 1997, we saw John when he visited Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. This was his first Mennonite engagement after going through a church discipline process. He gave a typically thorough and insightful lecture. During discussion, he was asked from the floor about the accusations and process. I felt he gave a forthright response, speaking openly of the inappropriateness of his actions and his desire for healing for the people he hurt.

John Howard Yoder is a giant in the field of theological ethics. I have alluded to his impact in the wider church—his profound influence in both Catholic and Protestant pastoral training, which has and will for some time filter through the broader church.

My comfort comes from Yoder's own confession that our calling is not to make history come out right. That task is in God's hands. Our task is to trust God and to live in response to God's never-ending mercy.

He has had an immense impact on Mennonite theology—most directly through his teaching at AMBS and through the work of many Mennonite theologians directly influenced by him (including, among many others, Duane Friesen, Harry Huebner, J. Denny Weaver and Ray Gingerich).

Mennonite pastors throughout the United States and Canada have been shaped by this theology and have in turn shaped their parishioners with it. Beyond North America, Yoder has also directly and profoundly influenced many Mennonite pastors. My own acquaintances include such pastors in France, Japan, Colombia, Brazil, Netherlands, Somalia and even a Reformed pastor in Switzerland.

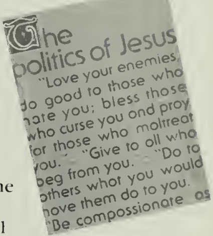
Heart and mind: I believe Yoder's central impact comes from his profound, coherent, thoroughgoing pacifist theology. Without compromise, without equivocation—but also without arrogance or self-satisfaction—Yoder presented the case for Christian pacifism, based ultimately on the gospel of Jesus Christ and the character of the biblical God. When I first encountered Yoder's thought, I was a pacifist of the heart. And I know he agreed that is where the core of pacifism lies. But he provided understanding for my faith, a way to integrate my heart with my mind.

At the core of this understanding, with much broader significance than simply as a basis for pacifism, Yoder presented a thoroughly persuasive case for the social relevance of Jesus' entire way of life. "The politics of Jesus" essentiall means that Jesus is profoundly normative for Christian existence in all aspects of life—how we relate to God and to our community of faith, but also how we relate to our social world.

A general lesson I learned from Yoder has comforted me in coming to terms with this too-early loss. I feel sadness, but also I grieve that the many projects on which he was working at the time of his death will remain incomplete. The comfort I draw, though, comes from Yoder's own confession of the importance of trust in God as the sovereign over history. A great deal of human violence results from our vain efforts to "make history come out right." Our calling is not to make history come out right. That task is in God's hands. Our task is to trust God and to live in response to God's never-ending mercy.

One of Yoder's lesser-known books (regrettably) is called *Karl Barth and the Problem of War*. Yoder studied with the great Swiss theologian in the 1950s. This book is a sincere form of flattery: a serious engagement with the implications of Barth's theology concerning warfare—and ultimately a pretty sharp critique. However, Yoder expressed his respect for Barth in the book's dedication: "To the memory of one who faithfully fulfilled the office of teacher in the church." I believe these words also apply to John Howard Yoder, and I think he would have felt there could be no higher praise.

Ted Grimsrud teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.



The politics of Jesus

"Love your enemies,
do good to those who
hate you; bless those
who curse you and pray
for those who maltreat
you. "Give to all who
beg from you. "Do to
others what you would
have them do to you.
"Be compassionate as

T*he Politics of Jesus* made sense of my entire world. It was a challenging book, stylewise—at least for a beginner in theology like me. Big words, complex arguments. It dealt with so much that was new to me, a whole new vocabulary. A book with dense, content-packed footnotes and a revolutionary message: The New Testament, in all its diverse materials, is unified on one point—the way of Jesus, the way of suffering love, the way of peace, is normative for all aspects of life for all Christians. I agree with those who see *Politics* as a classic theological text. I have returned to it time after time over the years, almost always finding some new insight.
—*Ted Grimsrud*

Let them be scattered and bless all the earth

by Michael A. King

Rather than nurture the rich variety of what's small, frail, local, grassroots, we've wanted things big, strong, centralized, unified. To such temptations the Lord says, "This is just the beginning."

> **And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.—*Genesis 11:6-8***

"Come on," says the Lord in the jaunty Contemporary English Version Bible translation, "let's confuse them by making them speak different languages—then they won't be able to understand each other" (Genesis 11:7).

It seems folks had recovered from Noah's flood to "spread all over the world" (10:32). Now they faced a challenge. "At first everyone spoke the same language, but after some of them moved from the east and settled in Babylonia" (11:1-2), they felt increasingly torn by the growing differences in geographic settings, languages, cultures.

"They said, 'Let's build a city with a tower that reaches to the sky. We'll use hard bricks and tar instead of stone and mortar. We'll become famous, and we won't be scattered all over the world' " (11:3-4).

The plot thickens. The Lord checks things out. God is not impressed. Or God finds things far too impressive: "When the Lord came down to look at the city and the tower, he said, 'These people are working together because they all speak the same language. This is just the beginning. Soon they will be able to do anything they want' " (11:5-6).

The Lord makes all babble break loose: "So the people had to stop building the city, because the Lord confused their language and scattered them all over the earth. That's how the city of Babel got its name" (11:8-9).

This intriguing text invites us to ponder its warnings. And it prepares the way for us to trust that when the tower falls, faith rises to offer its own blessings.

Note what an ancient temptation it is not to be "scattered all over the world." From the start we've feared and fled diversity and difference. Rather than nurture the rich variety of what's small, frail, local, grass-roots, we've wanted things big, strong, centralized, unified. To such temptations the Lord says, "This is just the beginning."

And it always is. Long after Babel, around the 1600s and particularly in the Western world, there emerged more folks, mostly men, who again felt there was too much babble. They said, "We must find universal principles of reasoning through which to convince everybody of the same universal truths."

This quest, which came to have such names as "the Enlightenment" and "modernism," transformed all it touched. It left as its legacy the tower of Reason, around which all thinking people were to gather, united by the single language of modern rationality.

Postmodernism: But maybe the Lord decided to come down and take a look, and maybe the Lord said, "This is just the beginning." Maybe that's one reason there is now something loose, amid the shambles of the Enlightenment, called postmodernism. According to postmodernism, the Enlightenment was a Tower of Babel. Reason, the postmodernists say, is not some universal language we can all use in the same way to agree on exactly the same truths.

Instead we are each shaped by the countless languages of the different communities, life histories, experiences, cultures and subgroups within which we live and move and have our being. We must accept that we've once more been scattered because the Lord, or at least postmodernism, has confused our language.

Postmodernism is one way the Lord scatters those who in enlightened pride think we can reach the sky. Postmodernism has helped us see that the world "enlightened" ones have glimpsed isn't the only world to gaze on.

The rainbow of people who make up the earth's scattered races, cultures and genders have their different, vibrant ways of seeing. To take the eyes of one group and make them the eyes of the whole world is to raise that fateful tower. I love postmodernism's quest to give us back the world as seen by so many more eyes than we've been gazing through.

But there's another side. Since entering Temple University graduate studies in 1993, I've heard hundreds of times that we'll never agree on anything because we all start from the different places constructed in us by the unique forces that have made us. This makes me fear a tower of postmodernism is rising.

The builders of this tower help us tear down all other towers. Then they risk having us gather round their new tower in consensus that we can never and need never agree on anything because we're all so dissimilar and our differences are what we're on earth to celebrate. This postmodernism I'm tempted to hate because it may make us only quarreling lovers of our narrow truths rather than help us build bridges across differences.

I aimed in my doctoral studies to find ways to be postmodern yet bring us together. I'd sought ways we could, even in times when we no longer agree on how to reason or even what truth is, find points of unity. I wanted, for example, to find ways to persuade even those who don't share my Christian faith that there are good and bad ways to live.

But I failed. I found no way, for instance, to convince those not inclined to accept the Bible's authority that enemies should be loved, not killed.

Christians belong in the thick of today's postmodern discussions. We belong there along with all the other richly different peoples of the world.

There comes a time for many who value scholarship when we must grant that some of what we cherish only faith, not reason, can justify. This moment deepened my commitment to the church. It invited me to see that some values find support only in that community where we together travel by faith toward what God says is good.

There was more to the journey, however, than simple retreat back to church. I also felt myself called to the stage of the journey that follows God's scattering of peoples. Look at what happens.

In the next verse after telling about Babel (11:10), Genesis begins the story of Abraham with an account of Abraham's ancestors. In the first verse of the very next chapter (12:1) the Lord, who has wrecked the tower-building, tells Abraham (still named Abram): "Leave your country, your family and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you. I will bless you and make your descendants into a great nation." And listen to this: "You will become famous," says the Lord (v. 2). Then God underscores that all the scattered peoples whose quest for fame has been undone will nonetheless be affected. "Everyone on earth will be blessed because of you" (v. 3).

Put the tower and Abraham together, and what do you get? On the one hand, the warning that God allows no one to do or know everything they want. Throughout history, all who try to find that single language, all who build the tower of that one truth that is only God's to know, find themselves scattered. This is the case whether our tower is named Babel, the Enlightenment, postmodernism or the church.

Divine blessings: On the other hand, you get the wild and holy call of the same Lord to go out into all the scattered world with divine blessings. This means that Christians belong in the thick of today's postmodern discussions. We belong there along with all the other richly different peoples of the world.

We belong there with a message that God calls us to celebrate differences and seek ties that bind. We belong there doing our best to make appealing to others the values that flow from our different communities of faith even as we learn from the alternate values they cherish. We belong in exam settings where even as our projects prove fallible—as they should because they always are—we contribute to the world's never-ending pondering of what reason, truth or wisdom are and are not.

Babel and Abraham held together show us that if we convince everybody, including ourselves, that we know all, we fail. But if we withdraw, as Christians often do when others don't buy our statements based on faith, we fail as well. The blessing withers.

First the Lord came down and scattered us all. Then the Lord told us to leave country, family, relatives—and maybe at times aspects of the church—to become famous in the right and not the wrong ways and bless everyone on earth.

Michael A. King, Telford, Pa., is interim pastor at Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church and a doctoral candidate at Temple University, Philadelphia, in rhetoric and communication. He owns Pandora Press U.S., which publishes Anabaptist-Mennonite books, and InterLink Communication Services.

From *Stories from the Bible*, illustrated by Bert Bouman (Eerdmans, 1979)

MBM video wins top award

HARRISONBURG, Va.—*Rhythms of Peace,* a children's video from Mennonite Board of Missions' Mennonite Media, has received a Crystal Award of Excellence from The Communicator Awards. The Crystal Award, given to productions "whose ability to communicate elevates them above the best in the field," is given to the top 10 percent of entries. There were nearly 3,000 entries this year.

Rhythms of Peace contains stories and songs about peacemaking for children ages 8 to 11.—*MBM News Service*

Colony Mennonites join Mexico storm response

AKRON, Pa.—German-speaking Mennonite colonists from northern Mexico have joined with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mexico City Mennonites to assist in housing construction for victims who lost their homes in an October hurricane.

Two colony Mennonites joined MCC Mexico co-director Marlin Yoder last month in a visit to the state of Oaxaca, which had been pounded by Hurricane Pauline. One of the colonists is building a simpler version of a commercially available adobe block press. Blocks formed in presses need not be kiln-fired, thereby saving firewood. The colony Mennonites will fund at least one press and supply two volunteers.—*MCC News Service*

Ontario fund directs tax savings to poor

KITCHENER, Ont.—In the last year and a half, a Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada (MCEC) fund has directed about $12,000 to people who have lost government financial assistance.

MCEC created the Micah Fund in July 1996 in response to provincial tax cuts and cuts in social programs. Another series of tax cuts came last month. MCEC members are invited to donate their tax savings to the fund. —*Canadian Mennonite*

MEDA tours Haiti development work

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Before getting down to business at their annual midwinter board meeting, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) members and staff saw the benefits and frustrations of development work in Haiti.

During the Feb. 1-8 visit to the impoverished island nation, MEDA members saw agency-supported work such as tree nurseries, a farm cooperative, a factory and a credit union. But the 41 tour participants also saw greater needs.

"We want to help everyone but can't," said Ted Andres of Vancouver. "MEDA shouldn't be discouraged that we can't help everyone at once. We also help people one by one." —*MEDA News Service*

"I am catching a vision for pastoral ministry which comes out of my own spiritual journey—as something that comes from an inner calling."

Renate Dau Klaassen

Renate Dau Klaassen,
AMBS student

"After a lengthy pastorate, I'm enjoying God's spiritual renewal at seminary together with peers and the guiding eye of professors. It's a renewing of the ministry I want to give my life to."

Randy Klaassen, AMBS student

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Events

Michiana Anabaptist Historians spring meeting, March 21, Forks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind. Subject: "Some Ministers of Vision in the Early 1900s." Contact: 219-533-7819.

The Giving Project Gathering, April 3-4, Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind. Contact: GivingProject@Prodigy.net, 219-296-6236.

Y-LEAD youth ministry and leadership training program, July 9-12, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Speakers: Brad Bame, Mark Vincent, Michele Hershberger, Carlos Romero. Contact: Joyce Schumacher or Randy Keeler, 800-488-3257.

Workers

Amstutz, Lorraine Stutzman, Quakertown, Pa., started as director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Office on Crime and Justice on Dec. 22

Brunner, Dave ended as chaplain at Greencroft retirement community, Goshen, Ind., on Feb. 6.

Miller, Lynn has joined Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind., as stewardship minister.

Births

Becker, Jonathan Merle, Jan. 23, to Janet (Brubaker) and Merle Becker, Kinzers, Pa.

Buckwalter, Selina Omi, Jan. 25, to Michael and Yoko Buckwalter, Bluffton, Ohio.

Derstine, Luke, Jan. 11, to Rosita (Benner), and Tim Derstine, Danville, Pa.

Diener, Tyler Andrew, Dec. 4, to Amy (Ingle) and Glen Diener, Arthur, Ill.

Garber, Joshua Daniel and Josiah Roy (twins), Dec. 4, to Jeremy and Julie (Hackmann) Garber, Belton, Mo.

Handrich, Shelby Pearl, Jan. 26, to Pam (Geister) and Rick Handrich, Fairview, Mich.

Haywood, Christian Cameron, Jan. 19, to Christopher and Linda Haywood, Lansing, Ill.

Hostetler, Leah Cynthia, Jan. 8, to Bruce and Christy (Wallace) Hostetler, Pittsburgh.

Kaercher, Leah Elizabeth, Jan. 21, to Brian and Jill (Alderfer) Kaercher, Pennsburg, Pa.

Krupp, Micah Carlton, Jan. 29, to Brenda (Miller) and Brian Krupp, Souderton, Pa.

Lytle, Thomas Dean, Jan. 12, to Brenda (Nice) and Brian Lytle, Yorktown, Va.

Oesch, Curtis Harold, Dec. 30, to Jana (Earnest) and Mike Oesch, Caldwell, Idaho.

Pickard, Duncan Samuel, Jan. 16, to Kevin and Wendy (Roth) Pickard, Mount Pleasant, Iowa.

Pride, William Dale, Jan. 5, to Jeff and Lisa (Baker) Pride, Burbank, Ohio.

Rayburn, Chloë Korrigan, May 9, to Jeffrey and Susan (Litner) Rayburn, Rensselaer, Ind.

Richer, Noah Allen, Feb. 3, to Michelle (Miller) and Scott Richer, Wauseon, Ohio.

Rider, Jared Robert, Jan. 27, to Beverly (Martin) and Randall Rider, Dover, Pa.

Roth, Mikhaila Denae, Jan. 31, to Cheryl (Bodeen) and Jered Roth, Lincoln, Neb.

Schlegel, Hannah Leigh, Jan. 25, to Kurt and Pam (Ames) Schlegel, Shreve, Ohio.

Slabaugh, Caleb Joseph, Dec. 26, to Eunice (Shirk) and Steve Slabaugh, Penn Laird, Va.

Taylor, Lake Samuel Alan, Jan. 9, to Todd and Tracy Taylor, Blanchard, Idaho.

Tweed, Alexander Michael, Jan. 23, to Jennifer (Simmers) and William Tweed, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Marriages

Bishop/Showalter: Genevieve Bishop, LaJunta, Colo., and Richard Showalter, Chino Valley, Ariz., Jan. 18, by Leonard Redding.

Clymer/Knepp: Regina Clymer, Shirleysburg, Pa., and Aaron Knepp, Wabash, Ind., June 1, by David Philips.

Friesen/Klassen: Stacie Friesen, Buhler, Kan., and Patrick Klassen, Buhler, Dec. 27, by Wayne Hochstetler and Harold Graber.

Griffin/Unruh: John Griffin, Newton, Kan., and Jill Unruh, Inman, Dec. 13, by Dean Linsenmeyer.

Kauffman/Landis: Edith Kauffman, Kalispell, Mont., and Paul Landis, Carstairs, Alta., Dec. 27, by Jeryl Hollinger.

Kozyra/Yoder: Maximillion Gene Kozyra, Rensselaer, Ind., and Lisa Yoder, Burr Oak, Mich., Sept. 20 by Philip Leichty.

Lade/Ray: Crystal Lade, Fair Oaks, Ind., and Kevin Ray, Rensselaer, Nov. 8, by Philip Leichty.

Lehman/McClure: Eldon Lehman, Chambersburg, Pa., and Penny McClure, Chambersburg, Nov. 15, by Pat Jones and Allen Lehman.

Marner/Sullivan: Sarah Marner, Arthur, Ill., and Brian Sullivan, Champaign, Dec. 6.

Martin/Miller: Darrell Martin, Minneapolis, and Cynthia Miller, Minneapolis, Feb. 21, by Robert Miller.

Miller/Schrock: Linda Miller, Arthur, Ill., and Delmar Schrock, Arthur, Nov. 29, by Phil Schrock.

Miller/Welty: David Miller, Clarence, N.Y., and Kara Welty, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 3, by W. Roy Walls Jr. and Allen Longnecker.

Mitchell/Nichols: Debbie Mitchell, Indiana, and Scott Nichols, Ohio, Feb. 14, by D.C. Seville.

Nissley/Wenger: Marian Nissley, Lewisburg, Pa., and Dale Wenger, Columbiana, Ohio, Feb. 7, by David Martino.

O'Halloran/Peachey: Keith O'Halloran, Hesston, Kan., and Leigh Ann Peachey, Hesston, Jan. 17, by Ken Schuckman.

Tackett/Wyse: Tamara Tackett, Harrisonburg, Va., and Derek Wyse, Harrisonburg, Nov. 1, by Philip Kniss and Philip Kreider.

Deaths

Ivarado, Donna, 61, Hudson Lake, Ind., died Jan. 27, of cancer. Survivors: husband, Guadalupe; children Tina Harter, Vicki Swartzentruber, Nicolas; parents, Richard and Mabel Baker; seven grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 31 at New Carlisle by Esther Lanting.

Balzer, Earl M., 70, Gresham, Ore., died Jan. 18, of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Lois; children Thayne, Ronna Unger, Jenelle Ediger; parents, Henry and Helen Balzer; six grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 22 by Teresa Moser.

Bartholow, Virginia Astor, 43, Charleston, S.C., died Jan. 22. Survivors: husband, Ray; children Heather Rogulski, Ashley; foster parents, Jim and Isabel Mullett; two grandchildren. Cremated.

Burkholder, Fern, 94, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Dec. 18. Burial: Dec. 20 at Rittman by Paul G. Conrad.

Collins, Richard A., 84, Bedford Heights, Ohio, died Jan. 17. Survivors: sons Richard Jr., Earl, Raymond; 11 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 20 at Twinsburg by David Orr.

Fenton, Evelyn Merillat, 67, Wauseon, Ohio, died Jan. 15, of cirrhosis of the liver. Survivors: husband, Raymond; children Robert, Max David, Thomas, William, Barbara Stewart, Lori Rice; mother, Sylvia Merillat; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Feb. 2 at Pettisville by Randy Nafziger.

Fisher, Sylvester, 85, Honey Brook, Pa., died Jan. 22. Survivors: wife, Anna; children Allen, Janet Feister; one grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 26 at Gap by Herman Glick and Lester Graybill.

Frederick, Ruth Ann Nyce, 51, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 2, of complications from diabetes. Survivors: husband, T. Dale; daughter, Jennifer; parents, Harvey and Grace Nyce. Burial: Feb. 6 at Souderton, by Gerald Clemmer and David Greiser.

Landes, Ellsworth, 83, Lakewood, Colo., died Jan. 22, of a stroke. Survivors: wife, Olive; daughter, Martha King; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 26 at Wheat Ridge by Mark Miller and Roger Hochstetler.

Oyer, Ida Jane Yoder, 83, Fisher, Ill., died Jan. 29. Survivors: husband, Elmer; sons Darrel, Gary, Norman; seven grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 2 at Fisher by Michael Dean and Cal Kaufman.

Reist, Samuel F., 37, Mount Joy, Pa., died Jan 16. Survivors wife, Katy; children Peter, James, Jesse, Elizabeth. Burial: Jan. 24 at Mount Joy.

Schmid, Walter W., 79, Orrville, Ohio, died Jan. 27. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Barbara Fridley, Mary Kathryn Miller, Steve, John; 11 grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 27 at Smithville by John and Barbara Lehman and David Miller.

Schmidt, Arnold B., 84, Buhler, Kan., died Jan. 7, of cancer. Survivors: wife, Anna; children Arlo, Larry, Judy Goering, Marilyn Fanning; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Jan. 10 at Inman by Dean Linsenmeyer.

Shetler, Edna Fern Yoder Rhodes, 86, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 25. Survivors: children Warren, David, Ross, Jeanette Mellinger; stepsons Marland Shetler, Francis Shetler; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; five stepgrandchildren; 11 stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 28 at Kalona by Scott Swartzendruber and Mick Murray.

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Classifieds

Goshen College has a one-year, full-time position in teacher education department for academic year 1998-99. Supervise elementary student teachers and teach courses such as introduction to education, reading methods and elementary curriculum studies. Doctorate in education preferred; master's degree required. Teaching experience in elementary or secondary schools also required. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Faculty members are expected to share that commitment.

Send letter of application, curriculum vita and at least three professional references to Paul A. Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email dean@goshen.edu. Applications are encouraged through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Salford Mennonite Church seeks associate pastor. One of the oldest congregations in North America seeks person with a shepherd's heart, a passion for sharing a contemporary Anabaptist vision of God's shalom with members and neighbors, demonstrated capacity to empower others in ministry, especially in developing groups for nurture and outreach in diverse suburban community.

Contact James Longacre, pastor, Salford Mennonite Church, 480 Groff's Mill Road, Harleysville, PA 19438; 215-256-0778; fax 215-256-6562; email salford@enter.net, or check out our web site at www.enter.net/~salford/.

China Educational Exchange, an inter-Mennonite program, is sponsoring a five-week teaching program in China this summer. One week of orientation and sightseeing in Beijing is included, and teaching experience is not required. For more information, contact CEE at 1521 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-6983; email ChinaEdEx@aol.com.

Bethel College, a private, liberal arts, undergraduate college affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church and accredited by the North Central Association, invites applications and nominations for the position of Dean of Enrollment Services. The college's distinctive emphases include peacemaking and voluntary service, global awareness and personal discipleship rooted in free conviction and commitment to Christian community.

A cabinet-level position reporting directly to the President will provide leadership and supervision of a new enrollment service unit which will include but not be limited to admissions, financial aid, career development and placement, freshman advising program, committee on retention, center for academic development, orientation, and a freshman-year experience program.

The successful candidate will have a demonstrated body of knowledge in enrollment management, and a record of successful implementation of enrollment management strategies. This person must have significant experience in recruitment, retention or enrollment services at the college level. Leadership, organizational and communication skills, a proactive work style and a commitment to Bethel's mission are essential. Bethel is an EO/AA employer, women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Review of applications will begin March 9.

Send resume, four professional references with phone numbers and addresses, and letter of application stating your enrollment manager philosophy to Dean of Enrollment Services Committee, Office of the President, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th, North Newton, KS 67117-0531. www.bethelks.edu.

Frederick Mennonite Community, Route 73, Montgomery County, Frederick, Pa., is looking to fill a newly created position of Development Officer. This individual will be responsible for the fund-raising activities of the organization. College degree and fund-raising or development experience with one or more nonprofit agencies required. Please mail or fax resume to Yvonne Caputo, H.R. manager, Frederick Mennonite Community, P.O. Box 498, Frederick, PA 19435; fax 610-754-6475.

Wilderness Wind, a Mennonite camp in Minnesota, invites groups and individuals to (1) a father-son trip planned for mid-July, (2) canoe trip in Boundary Waters while reflecting on the Psalms with Ron Guengerich (July 26-31), or (3) hike the backwoods Kekekabic Trail in late summer. Contact Kathy Landis, 316-283-5132.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., is currently accepting applications for the position of Development Associate. Qualifications: bachelor's degree, fund-raising experience highly desirable, effective interpersonal and public communication skills, a self-starter with the ability to take initiative in maintaining and sustaining professional relationships. Responsibilities include the identification and cultivation of potential donors and alumni in a systematic fashion in conjunction with the college development team. Appointment date and salary are negotiable and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Send a letter of inquiry with resume by June 30 to Bev Mayer, director of human resources, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th, North Newton, KS 67117. Bethel College is an affirmative action, equal-opportunity employer.

Hesston College: Resident Director for women's residence hall. The resident director will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff; assist in enforcement of campus standards, and function as a member of the student life team. Qualifications include a strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite Church, leadership ability, and good listening, caring and confrontation skills. Applicants should be prepared to make a two-year commitment. Bachelor's degree preferred.

Apply to dean of students, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email CharH@hesston.edu or call 316-327-8236 with questions. Application deadline: March 13.

Hinkletown Mennonite School invites applicants for the position of administrator starting July 1998. Qualifications include master's degree and at least six years of successful administrative and / or teaching experience. Training in school administration and possession of teaching certificate preferred. HMS serves 200 students in grades K-8 in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa.

For more information about the school, you may visit the student-produced web site at http://home.ptdprolog.net/~hmsstaff. Please send resume to Jim Shenk, 37 Third St., Akron, PA 17501.

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by Rich Preheim

Lessons from a family dispute

There is perhaps nothing as messy as a family dispute. And the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is "taking it on the chin from our Lutheran cousins," reports the ELCA's *The Lutheran.*

Like Mennonitism, the Lutheran presence in North America has been marked by an ever-changing spectrum of conferences or synods in and out of fellowship with each other.

The ELCA was created in 1987 when the American Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches merged. Now the ELCA has declared itself in full communion with three Reformed bodies and has supported a joint declaration on justification on faith with the Roman Catholic Church.

The ELCA's ecumenical activities, according to *The Lutheran,* have prompted conservative groups to charge the church with forsaking Lutheranism.

The president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has invited into membership "any ELCA congregation, pastor or layperson who now recognizes that their church body has made a decision that compromises what it means to be a fully Lutheran church." Meanwhile, a professor at a conservative Lutheran seminary says ELCA teaching "departs from Scripture," and a Lutheran pastor and editor has proclaimed in print "Death of the ELCA."

As the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church proceed with merger, similar charges may occur in our circles as well. But the love of God and fellowship within the family of faith can transcend the human-made boundaries of church affiliation.

The wages of Christian widgets?

The underlying tenet of the Mennonite faith is discipleship: conducting ourselves in a Christ-like manner every day of the week. That obviously is not a point of emphasis for every Christian. Without passing judgment on its appropriateness for other areas of our lives, I find it infuriating when a lack of discipleship intrudes on our workdays and suppertimes.

Pretend you and a total stranger are best buddies just for the sake of selling a Christian widget?

In its most recent issue, *Wireless Age*—a magazine billing itself as "The Information Source for Christian Media"—offers some tips for over-the-phone salespeople, including what to do to get past a secretary or receptionist.

"If you sound confident and like you know the decision maker, most of the time you get through," *Wireless Age* advises.

Pretend you and a total stranger are best buddies just for the sake of selling a Christian widget? Sounds like deception to me.

We might expect such techniques from a nonbeliever. But consider the words of the psalmist: "You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful" (Psalm 5:6).

Rest in peace

It may seem more than a tad incongruous, but among the headstones in Arlington National Cemetery will be one with the symbol of a historic peace church. Cemetery officials recently approved the use of the Church of the Brethren logo (right) for use on the memorial for Frank William Miller, a member of Woodberry Church of the Brethren in Baltimore, who died Oct. 12, 1997, at the age of 78.

Miller served as a medical photographer at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington during World War II.

The Church of the Brethren logo becomes only the 32nd religious symbol approved for use at the cemetery, according to *Messenger*, the denominational magazine.

Church of the Brethren logo.

Drop-kick me, Jesus …

In case you missed it during all the holiday football bonanza, the first Victory Bowl was played Nov. 29, 1997, at the National Football League Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. Olivet Nazarene University, Kankakee, Ill., defeated MidAmerica Nazarene University, Olathe, Kan., 56-42.

The bowl was sponsored by the National Christian College Athletic Association. According to the Church of the Nazarene's *Heralds of Holiness,* the two teams were selected because of their win-loss records (both entered the game with 7-3 records), strength of schedule and positive way they represent the Lord.

General Conference Mennonite Church schools Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Bluffton (Ohio) College, plus the Mennonite Brethren's Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., are the only Mennonite colleges that play football. And none of them had a stellar season in 1997. Bethel finished with a 5-5 record, Bluffton at 4-6, and Tabor won one game all year.

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by Gordon Houser

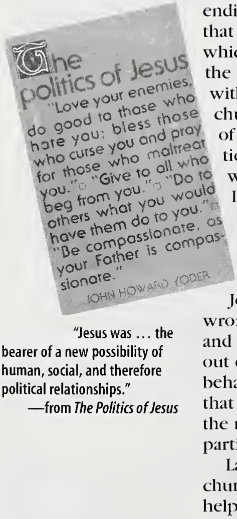
With Jesus on the low road

Watch out! You never know when some small event will have life-changing repercussions. Here's one example.

In the fall of 1974, when I was a student at Wichita (Kan.) State University, I was browsing the shelves in a Christian bookstore when my gaze fell on a book titled *The Politics of Jesus*. Although I was familiar with the publisher (Eerdmans), I was appalled by the title. How audacious! I thought. Jesus had no politics.

Out of curiosity, I bought the book. I read that the author, John Howard Yoder, was a Mennonite, but I knew next to nothing about Mennonites. Only that they showed up after disasters—like the tornado that hit my hometown of Emporia, Kan., the previous spring—to help clean up.

That book coming to my attention was serendipitous. I had transferred to the university that fall after three semesters at a Bible college, which had given me helpful tools for studying the Scriptures. One of the questions burning within me was: What does being a faithful church involve? Yoder's book answered many of my questions and pointed me in the direction of Anabaptism. Eventually I found my way to a Mennonite congregation, and here I am.



The Politics of Jesus
"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you and pray for those who maltreat you." "Give to all who beg from you." "Do to others what you would have them do to you." "Be compassionate, as your Father is compassionate."
JOHN HOWARD YODER

"Jesus was … the bearer of a new possibility of human, social, and therefore political relationships."
—from *The Politics of Jesus*

Like Ted Grimsrud (see his article on page 8), I experienced a coming together as I read *The Politics of Jesus*. When in high school I first decided to follow Jesus, I had certain instincts about right and wrong, but I was not familiar with the Bible and received little Bible teaching. I knew without question that my racist language and behavior was wrong, and I quit it. I also felt that war (this was in 1969, and Vietnam was in the news) was wrong and that I should not participate in it.

Later I became involved in a fundamentalist church that emphasized Bible study, which helped me greatly. But it also taught that one should be patriotic and that it was OK to go to war. I felt ambivalent, but I had no argument against such teaching.

Head and heart: By the time I encountered Yoder's writing, I had begun to question many things. But pacifism took me a while to embrace. The logic presented in *Politics* persuaded me that to follow Jesus meant at least to commit myself to nonviolence. And I felt my head and my heart coming together.

I seldom read books more than once—except for the Bible—yet I read all of *Politics* twice, and much of it three times or more. My copy is well-worn (see left). In later years I read most of Yoder's other books. The reading was not always easy going, but his arguments were lucid, his logic clear. And he wrote without grinding an axe. It was obvious he took time to understand others' positions on issues. Some said he understood the just-war position, which he criticized, better than most people who argued for it.

In his book *The Priestly Kingdom,* Yoder wrote, "There is no road but the low road. The truth has come to our side of the ditch. . . . The real issue is not whether Jesus can make sense in a world far from Galilee but whether—when he meets us in our world, as he does in fact—we want to follow him."

Realistic for today: For me, Yoder served as an evangelist. He clarified the good news. I and many others asked: How is the Bible—and particularly Jesus' teaching—relevant in our world today? He helped make clear that what the Bible (and Jesus) taught was not some otherworldly ethic meant only for saints or angels but was—and is—realistic for today. He called his approach "biblical realism."

At that period in my life, I had a firm belief that the Bible was God's Word, but I had many questions about how it applied—or whether it applied—in my life, and especially in the life of the church. Yoder did not answer all my questions; he raised many. But he did help stir in me the belief that Jesus' coming to be among us means that our everyday life is capable of bearing the holiness that God intends.

Here's how Yoder put it in *Politics*: "Jesus was . . . the bearer of a new possibility of human, social, and therefore political relationships." This also underscored my attraction to Anabaptism, which teaches that by becoming a Christian I was not simply obtaining a ticket to heaven but entering an adventure of learning to imitate Jesus as part of a messianic community called the church.

That fateful glimpse of a book title—as if the Spirit knew how to attract this bibliophile's attention—led me on a path I had not anticipated and have never regretted. Be careful of what you glimpse or what little things you might stumble across on the low road where Jesus invites us to walk.—*gh*

the Mennonite

March 10, 1998

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no time to play

4 Persecution fans churches' flames
6 Diversity, tension at MCC U.S. meeting
8 Child labor: a growing concern
15 The power to name a whale

T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

A prophet against 'national interest'

In remembering John Howard Yoder, I wonder if we might also identify him as a prophet? In his book *When War Is Unjust*, he identifies "autonomous national interest" as a nonpacifist logic for war. This "national interest" logic was a clearly stated position by the U.S. government in the days before the crisis with Iraq was averted. Bill Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said, "We reserve the right to disagree [with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's trip] if the trip is not consistent with [U.N.] Security Council and our own national interest." I wonder if Yoder would have been as shocked and upset as I was to hear such a statement.—*Terry Berg, Fairview, Mich.*

Just the facts?

In her letter, Vicki Epp wanted us to look at the facts concerning homosexuality (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 17). It depends on who and what you read as to what the facts are. I have read studies that say there are only 1 percent to 2 percent of the population as being homosexual. I have also read that many practicing homosexuals were molested by same-sex persons when children. Because the word "homosexuality" did not exist until the 1890s does not mean that its practice was acceptable in Bible times. And just because the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of disorders does not make it acceptable. —*Leta Gerber, Fairview, Mich.*

I am disturbed by how easily we Christians buy into our culture and current worldview, believing what we hear as fact. The way I have always heard the Bible interpreted is you can't have an active homosexual relationship and be doing God's will.

People I haven't heard much from in this conversation are (1) Christian psychiatrists and others who work with mind and emotions and healing, (2) homosexual Mennonites and (3) heterosexual singles who are single because they are living God's plan rather than buying into popular American culture that says every adult should be sexually active.—*Bonnie Yoder Beachy, Paoli, Ind.*

The publication of letters such as Vicki Epp's appalls me because it reflects a careless approach to the issues which will shape the Mennonite church of the 21st century and detracts from the higher purpose of Readers Say: to be a forum where Mennonites, through thoughtful dialogue, can catch a glimpse of God's calling for our church.—*Rachel Nafziger, Lancaster, Pa.*

Integration disappointment

I was disappointed to read that the Integration Committee is not heeding the advice of its consultants to delay integration a year (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 17). How much better to do it right—especially regarding vision, mission and strategy—than to do it quickly.—*Don Garber, Goshen, Ind.*

Drop births, marriages and deaths

The new magazine looks very exciting, and I look forward to the content, both spiritually and educationally. But for a periodical that is covering and speaking to the Mennonite constituency coast to coast, the inclusion of births, marriages and deaths seems very provincial. I am not interested in paying for this kind of space. I suggest that people send announcements to those whom they feel would be interested.—*Roland P. Brown, North Newton, Kan.*

I would ask that you seriously consider dropping the section on marriages, births and deaths. I'm sure this section is well liked by many people. But it troubles me because it is dominated by "ethnic" Mennonites. It is quite rare that I see the names of Asian, Hispanic or African-American Mennonites. I know you are not excluding them. They simply don't send their names in. But until they do, this section of the magazine will continue to give a warped picture of the true face of our two denominations. And if you were somehow able to get all Mennonite congregations to send in such information, I don't see how you would have room to print all the names. So it seems to me it is an untenable part of the magazine either way.—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis*

More first responses

We received our first copy of *The Mennonite* and were really impressed. So much interesting news and thought-provoking articles. We especially liked "I Watched the State Kill My Friend." "Beginning with B, Starting with Two" went over our heads. But I'm sure someone was helped by it, so there was something for everyone.—*Harold and Esther Troyer, Shreve, Ohio*

I would rather have fewer pages and have larger type. It is very hard to read, especially since it is on shiny paper. I don't want to find fault, but it is the older people who read this paper.—*Leona E. Miller, Louisville, Ohio*

I received the first *The Mennonite*, and it looks good. My suggestion is don't use that small print. You have a lot of older people reading

theMennonite

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features

8 **Child labor: a growing concern**
The use of children in the workplace is on the increase around the world. Four articles tell how one organization—Mennonite Central Committee—attempts to deal with this problem.

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453.

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say readers say

The Mennonite, so please make it possible for us to read all that is in it.—*Arthur C. Waltner, North Newton, Kan.*

I had been eagerly awaiting the new *The Mennonite*. And then it arrived. I looked quickly to see if this new publication would give me any clues about integration. Would the magazine seem too GC since the name is the same as an earlier publication? Or would it seem to tilt toward the MC side to avoid any pretense of favoritism? Or would there be a unique sign unrelated to our two denominations that would be found in the pages of the new publication?

I looked no further than the staff photo on page 5 to discover the new truth. The new rule is that men with administrative responsibility in the new structures must have short beards and a slightly Clintonesque brushed-back hair style. What a reassuring note to begin on. But then I am a GC with a beard and my MC friends seem to be partial to the brushed-back hair style.—*George Lehman, Bluffton, Ohio*

The first issue of *The Mennonite* sparkles with an image of the future and a new generation. The colors, layout, content and "people news" will make it a well-received magazine in all of our Mennonite families and beyond. Let's hope that the common unity of presentation that you have captured will carry over into other parts of our new denomination, especially in education, missions and leadership. A paradigm shift, new ideas and forms of organization are urgently needed. Now is the time for new models to come forth.—*Lee M. Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Persecution fans churches' flames

Ethiopian, Indonesians tell MCC about growth

Our Muslim leader in Indonesia has been telling his people to stop burning our churches and to start reading history.

—Andreas Christanday

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Burning churches in Indonesia and forcing them underground in Ethiopia have not silenced the song of Christians in those countries. Instead, they sing more boldly.

Persecution fans the fire of church growth, said several church leaders who attended the annual Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) board meeting held Feb. 20-21 at Bethel College.

"Our Muslim leader in Indonesia has been telling his people to stop burning our churches and to start reading history," said Andreas Christanday of Indonesia, chair of the Asia Mennonite Conference. "He tells the people that the more they torture Christians and the more they suffer, the more they will grow."

Christanday is part of an Indonesian church that has endured increasing persecution. Rioters last November burned a Mennonite church in Bayursari Karyatani, causing an estimated $6,500 in damage—the equivalent of the total income of all households in the congregation.

In the past two years, more than 100 Christian church buildings have been burned in Indonesia. Though 396 churches since 1966 have been destroyed, almost all have been rebuilt, Christanday said.

Rebuilding is difficult in a country where income is low and government red tape is thick, but churches are fierce in their desire to survive, said Julius Rampen, pastor of a small Mennonite congregation in Indonesia.

"Our church is sitting in the path of a new highway that the government wants to build, and so we were told we had to tear it down," Rampen said. "But since they wouldn't give us permission to build it on another parcel of land, we tore down one side of it and are in the process of building [straight] up."

He said it is difficult to get permission from the government to build new churches. In the case of Rampen's congregation, Muslims heard the Mennonites were wanting to build on another piece of land. So they immediately went to that site to build a mosque. Since a mosque and a church cannot be built next to each other, Rampen's congregation had to back off.

Rampen is part of a 16-member Indonesian Mennonite Cultural Team that performed at the MCC meeting and toured churches in Kansas.

Ethiopian church leader Bedru Hussein, vice president of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), echoed Christanday. Persecution has caused the seeds first planted in his country, by MCC in 1946, to grow quickly, he said.

The Meserete Kristos Church—the Ethiopian group affiliated with MWC—has grown to 114,000 people, of whom half are baptized members. The MKC has 192 established churches and 310 church plants.

"They [communists] closed down 14 churches, and we opened hundreds more," Hussein said of the church's growth during its underground years in the 1980s and early '90s.

"When the communists came and nationalized our country, they imprisoned four church leaders and we had to go underground," he said. "We then organized into small cell groups of not more than seven to 10 [people], since if we had more, then the government would suspect something."

When cells grew to more than 10 people, they split into new cells. Eventually 1,500 cells were thriving. An overthrow of the communists in 1991 brought religious freedom.

Also during the MCC annual meeting:

- Ann Martin, MCC director for East Asia, reported the agency has given $2.8 million in cash and material resources to famine-stricken North Korea since April 1996.
- The MCC board approved a $40.6 million budget calling for $13.4 million in U.S. contributions, 3.3 percent more than last year.

—Laurie L. Oswald for Meetinghouse with MCC reports

Californians rallying to support Indonesians

Mennonites in Southern California are taking measures on behalf of their brothers and sisters in the faith in the troubled country of Indonesia. Among their efforts:

- Jeff Wright, Pacific Southwest Conference area minister, has sent a letter to the Indonesian Consulate in Los Angeles asking for greater attention to the safety of ethnic Chinese Christians in Indonesia. Recent mob violence has targeted ethnic Chinese; the Jemaat Kristen Indonesia Mennonite synod is predominantly ethnic Chinese.
- A resolution of support for Indonesian Christians will be introduced at the April meeting of the Pacific Southwest board.
- A pastoral letter has been sent to Southern California Mennonite congregations, urging them to set aside time during Lent to pray for the church in Indonesia.
- Pasadena Mennonite Church has raised more than $900 to assist an Indonesian Mennonite congregation burned in a riot. A benefit concert is planned for the Pacific Southwest assembly in June.
- A committee of Indonesian church leaders in California is exploring other ways to respond. Southern California is home to seven Indonesian Mennonite congregations.

—Infoserve

MCC board member calls for more young adults

Members of the Indonesian Mennonite Cultural Team perform a native dance and song Feb. 20 during the Mennonite Central Committee board meeting in North Newton, Kan.

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Concerns about a need for more participation by young adults both in the field and at the board table surfaced at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) annual meeting, held Feb. 20-21 on the Bethel College campus.

"If MCC wants to continue carrying out its mandate in future years, it must do more active solicitation of young people," said Steven Sider, a Brethren in Christ representative from Erie, Ont., and, at age 30, the youngest MCC board member.

He was concerned especially about increasing the involvement of people ages 25 to 39 in long-term service and on governing bodies. While 40 to 44 percent of MCC workers are in the 25 to 39 age group, the MCC board has only two members within that range.

The average age of all MCC workers is 40; the average age of MCC workers overseas is 37.

Dwight McFadden, MCC director of personnel, cited a trend of young people entering short-term programs rather than going for the three-year assignments requiring greater levels of credentialing and expertise.

MCC executive director Ron Matthies said these issues are slated for major attention at an April discussion with the executive committee chairs.—*Laurie L. Oswald for Meetinghouse*

MCC must do more active solicitation of young people.

—Steven Sider

New MEDA program stands in venture capital gap

WINNIPEG—It is the dream of many aspiring entrepreneurs to invent a terrific product or service and develop a company to bring it to market. Along the way they need someone with deep pockets . . . and maybe a strong stomach.

But most venture capital managers want big projects and the promise of hefty returns in order to loosen the purse strings. Their eyes glaze over if you try to sell them on the social benefits of your product.

Now Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) is ready to stand in the gap. It has established a Business Ventures Department (BVD) to provide "social venture capital" to innovative companies that may be neglected by conventional sources.

"We're open to getting involved in joint ventures with solid businesses that serve needs in low-income countries or that, through their job creation or products and services, are vital to the life of the community," says Ron Braun, director of MEDA's international development programs.

He says BVD will provide a mechanism for MEDA members and others to join with small business owners in other countries.

In addition to individual partners and investors, BVD will invite participation from socially conscious investment funds and banks with social mandates.

Behind BVD is the biblical teaching to share resources with the needy. This does not mean BVD will restrict itself to companies operated by Christians, Braun says, "but we'll only support businesses that are life-enhancing."

MEDA recently invested $50,000 in ProWater, a company making safe drinking water available to Haitians. MEDA has lent $35,000 to BayGen, an African manufacturer that employs handicapped workers to produce portable AM/FM and shortwave radios with built-in wind-up generators. The radio, which plays for an hour before needing a rewind, is useful in villages that lack electricity. BayGen will use the MEDA money to expand distribution to North America.

But these investments go beyond simply selling radios and other products.

"In a sense we are sharing the risk with the entrepreneurs, our partners," Braun says. "We're doing what businesspeople are supposed to do."—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

MEDA

Diversity, decentralization issues produce tensions at MCC U.S. annual meeting

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—During its annual meeting, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. board approved a proposal to move parts of the agency's work to its four regional offices by 2000 and to continue to increase the diversity of board and staff.

But the board also decided to call in an outside consultant and have the proposal rewritten in more structural language—a move which generated disagreement among members and highlighted MCC U.S.'s changing dynamics.

The "Proposal for the Future Relationship between MCC U.S. and the Regions" includes descriptions of the future national and regional boards, staff and programs. But at the Feb. 19 annual meeting at Bethel College, General Conference Mennonite Church representative Paul Quiring of Fresno, Calif., made the recommendation to rewrite the proposal because he thought the original proposal did not explain organizational responsibilities and relationships.

"What we are trying to make is a structural document about how you do business, and this document is primarily narrative," he said. "We need something that gives a clear definition of exactly what the structure of MCC U.S. is. If we'd accepted what we had here today, it would have had many unanswered questions."

But Quiring's recommendation did not receive unanimous support. "I think that this is a document that should come out of us and the way we act," said member-at-large Wilma Bailey of Grantham, Pa. "Maybe that does not mean clear lines and clean charts, but it should reflect our efforts to be faithful.

"Most of [board members'] comments had to do with the structure of the document and how it doesn't list goals and strategy," she said. "This has to do with worldview and how we process things, which is not necessarily uniform. The document is authentic to those of us involved in producing it and to the way MCC works."

The board will meet again in six months to discuss the rewritten proposal. It is part of the MCC U.S. "Broadening the Vision" policy on the agency's changing constituency—from rural to urban, from white to racially diverse—with a subsequent change in issues and focus.

Those changes were at the root of the discussions about the rewrite recommendation, said MCC Great Lakes representative Kay Bontrager-Singer of Goshen, Ind.

"We are seeing the first signs and tensions in how things are different as we begin to incorporate a broader and more diverse group than the traditional German Mennonite," she said. "These were the first ripples of a less conventional, traditional process.

"My observation is that the energy and interest of the white men on the board is going into structure, while persons of color are responding more to issues of inclusion."

MCC U.S. executive director Lynette Meck said, "These kinds of tensions show that we're succeeding [in diversifying]."

Under the approved decentralization plan, the only staff and program to remain at MCC U.S. headquarters are the executive office, directors of Community Ministries and Peace and Justice Ministries and three to four peace and justice staff members, including racism awareness and women's concerns. The rest of the work will be shifted to the four regional offices: East Coast in Akron, Pa.; Great Lakes in Kidron, Ohio; Central States in North Newton; and West Coast in Reedley, Calif.

The plan will also reduce the board's size from 30 to 11 members and calls for a composition of 50 percent women and at least 30 percent from racial and ethnic groups other than white.

Board members also agreed to keep the MCC U.S. commitment to anti-racism and antisexism initiatives.—*Melanie A. Zuercher for Meetinghouse*

Also at the Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S. annual meetings Feb. 19-21 in North Newton, Kan.:

- The MCC and MCC U.S. boards approved statements opposing military attacks by the United States on Iraq.
- MCC U.S. executive director Lynette Meck, assistant executive director Harold Nussbaum and administrative assistant Lori Wise were recognized by the MCC U.S. board. All three will be leaving their positions in the next six months. Meck has been in her position since 1989, Nussbaum since 1988 and Wise since 1991.
- Ground was broken for the new MCC Central States regional office facility near the Bethel College campus in North Newton.—*From Meetinghouse reports*

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Mary E Klassen

Ordination celebration

Marilyn Miller (left) and Emma Richards, the first women ordained in the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, respectively, enjoy a moment together during a celebration of 25 years of women in pastoral ministry, held in January at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Richards was ordained in 1973 and Miller two years later. Richards is now retired, and Miller is outreach ministries director for the Commission on Home Ministries.

Tampa, Fla., program gets grant

TAMPA, Fla.—A development initiative of College Hill Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions has received a three-year, $100,000 grant. The Children's Board of Hillsborough County awarded the grant to the Tampa Bay Alternative Project for its 3R Project, starting Jan. 1.

The project features weekly instruction and mentoring programs at a Tampa junior high school. The grant will enable 3R to expand into a second junior high school and to increase support staff time, equipment and office supplies. The grant will cover about 60 percent of the project's current operating costs.—*MBM News Service*

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MDS concludes Ontario work, begins Florida response

Mennonite Disaster Service has ended its clean-up work in Ontario in the wake of January's devastating winter storm, but MDS officials have offered additional help after the snow and ice melt. More than 160 volunteers cleaned 45 properties in the Kingston, Ont., area.

Meanwhile, MDS has started its response in tornado-stricken Florida. MDS investigators are still determining long-term response. Florida volunteers have established a base at Iglesia Cristiana Ebenezer Mennonite Church in Apopka, a suburb of Orlando.

MDS is also continuing to repair and rebuild homes in Manitoba's Red River Valley, which was submerged by last spring's flooding. Crews have worked on 837 sites and are currently working on eight rebuilding projects.—*From MDS and MCC reports*

Child labor

a growing concern

by Emily Will

"It's wrong that children have to work, but we do. It's even more wrong that they try to stop us working. If I can, I work all day and I finish around 7 in the evening. Afterward we play football to relax. It's exhausting but I enjoy myself. I earn between $5 and $8 a day, which I spend on clothes and food. . . . I would like to save money for school, but for now I can't because my mother is sick."
—Pablo, 14-year-old street-market porter and seller in Bogota, Colombia, as quoted in *New Internationalist*, July 1997

The 1997 International Labor Organization's figure of 250 million working children is low. It does not include working children in industrialized nations or child workers hidden from view, such as household helpers. Experts put the figure at closer to 400 or 500 million child laborers. That's half of all the children ages 6 to 14 in the nonindustrialized world.

Pablo is one of the world's estimated 250 million children ages 6 to 14 who must work to help themselves and their families survive.

Historically, children working is nothing new. In traditional rural societies, childhood was—and still is—viewed as a time to learn the basics of survival: planting, hunting, preparing food and other essentials of daily life.

In many places today, children tend animals, help plant or harvest crops, scare away birds or other animals trying to eat crops, look after younger children, haul water and firewood. Adults value children's contribution, if not view it as essential to family survival.

But the issue of child labor has taken on urgency with good reason. (See sidebar at left.) Perhaps what seems different about child labor now is the conditions under which so many children are working. Children are no longer necessarily part of a coherent society, learning roles for that community's ongoing sustenance.

A large part of today's growing concern over child labor hinges on exploitation. Are children being used to grease the gears of a global marketplace? In the past couple of decades, many industries and factories have moved to poorer countries, where labor is abundant and cheap.

MCC photo by Mark Beach

One of millions of child laborers: Bonifacio Lumaad began unloading ships in the Philippines at age 8.

Some children in these countries are experiencing abuses similar to those endured by children during the Industrial Revolution—abuses ingrained in our collective memories by Charles Dickens' miserable waifs.

We should ask these questions about today's working children: Does their work contribute to their development—physical, emotional, mental, moral? Is their treatment fair and just? Are they paid fairly? Would we feel comfortable putting children we love in such a position? Do the children themselves have a say in when, where and how they will work?

Maybe it's fortunate that the issue of children who work—where, how and why—is capturing world attention. In the absence of global economic reforms to redistribute wealth and make it unnecessary for children to work, rather than play and attend school, organizations are developing programs to at least support working children.

Emily Will is a writer and editor for Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa.

Playing dodgem
with Bolivian drivers

by Emily Will

Each morning Julio Cesar gets a bucket and a squeegee and heads for an intersection in downtown Santa Cruz, Bolivia. When the light turns red, the 15-year-old darts among the cars, quickly washing a windshield or two before the cars move on. The drivers may toss him a coin or two. They may ignore him, give him nothing. Or, annoyed, the drivers may make some nasty comments.

Julio has been washing windshields daily for the past four years. He began when his father's drinking problem advanced to where he no longer provided for his family. Julio had to start looking after himself. When his father died last year, the teenager dropped out of school. Any semblance of home life disappeared when his mother began traveling from place to place selling fruit.

Julio's prime concern became survival. He earns barely enough in a day to support himself. He buys food and used clothing at the marketplace. He is staying with his older brother, who sells newspapers on the streets.

Julio's future looked dim. How long could he feed and clothe himself by washing windshields? How long before he wasn't fast enough on his feet and a car accidentally hit him? Or before a drug dealer convinced him he could find "escape" from his harsh life? Without schooling, what else could he do?

A transformation: The story gets better. Julio learned of a program for working street children—almost all of them windshield-washers—located close to "his" intersection. The program is run by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Bolivia staff near their headquarters in downtown Santa Cruz.

When he first attended the sessions, Julio was angry at the world and disruptive to the program, called PRONATs—"Program for working children."

"He was one of the rowdiest and most foul-mouthed boys," says MCC worker Lorie Preheim, who directs the PRONATs program. "But now he's one of the most regular attenders. He looks after the younger boys and motivates them." Most recently from Washington, Lorie is affiliated with New Community Church in Washington and with Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church.

"I had to change," says Julio. "If not, I'd have no future. My life would just get rougher."

That he now sees possibilities for his future is in large part due to the activities he's been exposed to through PRONATs. He has learned, for example, how to operate the program's video camera, and he likes interviewing the other kids. He has learned how to use the computers at the MCC offices. Using "Paintbrush" software, he and a friend created an inspirational drawing for the PRONATs' center.

Julio also has learned how to use a sewing machine, and he helped make four puppets. Sometimes he helps perform puppet shows for other groups of kids in difficult situations.

The PRONATs staff is helping Julio obtain past report cards so he can re-enroll in school. When he graduates, they will help him get into a technical school to study metalworking.

The street kids seem to be reading, writing and doing math with much greater ease.—*Lorie Preheim*

Prime goal: Keeping or helping the children stay in or return to school is one of PRONATs' prime goals, says Lorie. Fatigue, stress and low self-esteem may cause working children to drop off in attendance, then quit school altogether.

Program staff keep working children up on their studies, using innovative methods—games, videos, crafts, outings. "We want them to be excited about learning," Lorie says.

"PRONATs has grown by leaps and bounds in the last six months," she writes in a report. Regular attendance has jumped from three to eight children to between 15 and 30.

"The street kids seem to be reading, writing and doing math with much greater ease," Lorie writes. "More importantly, they seem to feel more confident about their abilities, more interested in learning and less embarrassed about participating."

Emily Will is a writer and editor for Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa.

MCC Bolivia worker Lorie Preheim works with Julio Cesar (left) and Silez Belsu on computer documents to be used in a program presented to a large group of working children. Preheim's colleague Dennis Sanchez looks on.

MCC photo by Mark Beach

MCC photo by Mark Beach

No recourse: At the shipyard, Mennonite Central Committee worker Mary Ann Weber chats with "Karen," a 17-year-old who has unloaded fertilizer ships for the past two years. Karen has developed sinus problems that she blames on the fertilizer dust. She dreams of finishing school but needs to continue earning money to help her struggling family.

Child-friendly? No!

Contrary to its slogan, Davao City in the Philippines is not 'child-friendly,' but a Mennonite worker is helping it become more so.

by Pearl Sensenig

Hour after hour, deep in the ship's hold, barefoot children shovel fertilizer at a frantic pace. They struggle to fill huge nets that are then lowered by crane into hoppers on shore. Dry fertilizer cuts into the children's feet and palms; the dust leaves them gasping for breath in the stifling heat.

How can the some 1,000 children working in situations like this at the dock by Sasa Port, Philippines, best be helped? That is the question facing Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) child advocate Mary Ann Weber and the Filipino organization Kaugmaon, for which she works.

"When I first arrived, I thought child labor should be banned," says Mary Ann. "But I realized that desperately poor families depend on their children's incomes. If the children can't work at the shipyard, they may be forced into even riskier jobs, such as prostitution, or may have to leave home to work in the gold mines north of the city."

Mary Ann, who formerly taught at Kraybill Mennonite School in Mount Joy, Pa., and is a member of Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church, also recognizes the pride some children take in their work. "In Pennsylvania, farm children talked proudly about how they had been out on tractors helping their families," she says. "It's the same here—some children are happy to be helping."

The difference is the conditions under which children labor. Filipino children unloading fertilizer from these ships, which carry cargo from one island to another, work 12-hour shifts. Last year a boy suffocated when a mountain of fertilizer collapsed on him. Employers often cheat children out of their wages, knowing they have no recourse.

Mary Ann and her colleagues at Kaugmaon focus on helping working children get an education so they can escape the cycle of poverty that makes child labor seem necessary. The agency is also trying to make the children's work situations more humane.

Sasa Port, home to more than 1,500 people, is a cluster of wooden shacks that adjoins Davao City's largest port. Children eagerly show their "secret passageway," a narrow rocky ledge protruding over the ocean that leads to a hole in the shipyard's security fence. This is how the children sneak into work—though the activity is in plain view of a coast guard ship anchored off shore.

Few opportunities: When a ship is in port, the owners want it unloaded quickly so they can minimize docking fees. Children often work through the night. One former child laborer recalls, "The next day at school, we would be so sleepy we could hardly understand the teacher." Many parents, who themselves had few opportunities for education, often don't see the value of regular school attendance.

Ellyn Togonon, 19 and one of four Sasa Port residents attending college, recalls another obstacle: "I used to be discriminated against in school because I come from this bad area. I wouldn't tell people where I was from because people think Sasa Port has a lot of prostitutes."

Kaugmaon began a preschool in Sasa Port to help stimulate the minds of the community's 3- to 6-year-olds, to build their confidence and better prepare them for primary school. One side benefit has been a new interest in education. The community flocks to preschool programs, including a recent dance performance by the children, and eagerly volunteers to help the teacher. Kaugmaon provides some scholarships to Sasa Port students. Currently four residents are in college and more than 20 in high school.

Kaugmaon has also opened a center by the port. Here working children can come for a hot meal during their midnight break. Those who don't live close to the port can have a nap if they are too tired to travel home after work. Staff turned part of the center into a learning corner stocked with dictionaries, maps and educational games.

Mary Ann edits a newsletter and gathers data about the plight of Davao City's working children. She hopes someday Davao City will live up to its slogan on signboards throughout the city: "Davao—a child-friendly city."

Pearl Sensenig is a writer and editor in the MCC Communications department.

Labor need not be exploitative

As an organization committed to trading fairly with artisans around the world, the question of how to deal with child labor is an important one for Ten Thousand Villages (TTV), the largest alternative trade organization in North America.

"We insist on reasonable working conditions," says Paul Myers, director of TTV. "While we don't buy products made through the exploitation of children, we don't object to children learning a trade in a family workshop or village cooperative—provided they also go to school."

In many locales where TTV purchases handicrafts, what the child earns is vital to the family's survival and for rural families helps ensure they can stay together in their village rather than one or all members becoming economic refugees to larger cities. Often what a child raises in handicraft production pays school fees allowing that child to gain an education. *—Larry Guengerich, Ten Thousand Villages*

Angela:

a Brazilian teenage housemaid

by Sally Jacober

Angela, 16, studies sixth grade at night. Her life has not been easy. When Angela's youngest brother was just a baby, her father left home, took another "wife" and began another family. Angela's mom became severely depressed and drank heavily.

Because Angela is the only daughter, she wound up taking care of the house and her little brothers and cooking all the food.

To make ends meet, Angela started working full-time when she was 13. She had two jobs doing child care and housework. An awkward situation arose at one of the homes. The family wanted Angela to have her meals with them, but she didn't know how to use the eating utensils. She was so nervous that she would take just a little portion of food. Then later when nobody was watching, she'd eat more.

At Angela's next job she had to sleep at her employer's home overnight on a mattress on the living room floor. She had only leftovers to eat, and she ate alone in the back yard. When the family went out, they locked her inside the house. After a month, Angela ran away back to her own home. She had made herself stay at the job a full month because her family so badly needed her earnings.

After that, Angela learned how to sew knapsacks and overnight bags, which she enjoys doing. She especially appreciates working with a group of girls about her age; they get along well and talk while they're working.

Angela's mom stopped drinking and now works cleaning houses. Her older brother, though, stays at home and drinks. He gets angry and hits Angela and the younger boys. Angela prays about this and wishes God would make him stop. Angela dreams of becoming a preschool teacher someday.

Sally Jacober, an MCC worker in Brazil from 1992 to 1996, wrote this profile in 1996.

MCC photo by Sally Jacober

Angela

Postscript: Last year, Angela moved in with a man, "so inevitably she has a baby by now," says Mennonite Central Committee worker Sally Jacober. She will likely not escape the poverty and back-breaking work she has endured throughout her life. "Angela was the child I was closest to in Brazil; she never really had a chance," Sally says.

Navajo radio broadcast on air for 40 years

PHOENIX—For 40 years, the Mennonite-sponsored radio program *Navajo Gospel Hour* has carried the Good News in the Navajo language to reservations in northeastern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico.

The program was started in 1957 by Mennonite Board of Missions worker Stanley Weaver. He was joined two years later by Naswood Burbank, who is still one of the *Navajo Gospel Hour's* speakers. Another Mennonite Navajo pastor, Daniel Smiley, is also a speaker. The program is carried on two Arizona Navajo reservation radio stations.

Navajo Gospel Hour is sponsored by the Southwest Navajo Mennonite Fellowship. A 40th anniversary celebration was held in November at Grace Mennonite Church in Phoenix. —*Mennonite Church General Board*

Bethel College honors young alumnus

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Joseph W. Harder, assistant professor of management at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, has been chosen the recipient of Bethel College's 1998 Young Alumnus Award.

Harder, a 1982 Bethel graduate, was presented the award at a March 9 convocation on campus. He received a master's degree from Santa Clara (Calif.) University and a doctorate from Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif. Harder's research has included perceptions and effects of leadership, wage systems and organizational performance and racial discrimination in professional baseball salaries.

Giving to Canadian conference on the rise

WATERLOO, Ont.—The Conference of Mennonites in Canada is reporting good financial news: Income for the 1997 fiscal year ran about $25,000 ahead of budget, reversing recent downward trends.

While the largest increase in income came from bequests, congregational giving was also up, says assistant conference treasurer Paul Klassen. The 1997 budget was about $1.2 million.—*Canadian Mennonite*

Displaced Colombians to receive assistance

AKRON, Pa.—At the request of Colombian Mennonites, Mennonite Central Committee is providing $15,000 for medicines and food for refugees displaced by Colombia's ongoing guerrilla war. Some 4,000 refugees are living in the city of Turbo—including 2,700 in a stadium—on the country's northwest Caribbean coast.—*MCC News Service*

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Bluffton College: Bluffton College announces a full-time, tenure track position in *communication* and *theater* beginning September 1998. Rank dependent on qualifications; doctorate in theater, communication or related field required; some college/university teaching experience preferred. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate courses in speech communication and theater (acting, production, directing, oral interpretation); directing two college theater productions each year; and the possibility of developing a modest forensics program. Consideration of applications begins March 16 and continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.

Send letter of interest, resume or vita, three letters of reference and official transcripts to Amy Tabler, Assistant to the VP and dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Bluffton College welcomes applications from all academically qualified faculty who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. EOE

Wilderness Wind camp seeks *summer staff* to lead 5- to 7-day canoe trips in the Boundary Waters. Must be at least 21 years old and enjoy the wilderness. Contact Kathy Landis at 316-283-5132.

China Educational Exchange, an inter-Mennonite program, is sponsoring a five-week *teaching program in China* this summer. One week of orientation and sightseeing in Beijing is included, and teaching experience is not required. For more information, contact CEE at 1521 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-6983; email ChinaEdEx@aol.com.

Frederick Mennonite Community, Route 73, Montgomery County, Frederick, Pa., is looking to fill a newly created position of *development officer*. This individual will be responsible for the fund-raising activities of the organization. College degree and fund-raising or development experience with one or more nonprofit agencies required. Please mail or fax resume to Yvonne Caputo, H.R. Manager, Frederick Mennonite Community, P.O. Box 498, Frederick, PA 19435; fax 610-754-6475. EOE

Events

Mennonite Economic Development Associates meeting of the Lancaster Chapter, March 17, 6:45 p.m., Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Speaker: Rodney J. Sawatsky.

Brethren/Mennonite Parents of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Children annual Connecting Families Retreat, March 20-22, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. Contact: Brethren/Mennonite Council, 612-722-6906 or BMCouncil@aol.com.

"Practicing Truth: Confident Witness in Our Pluralistic World" conference, March 26-28, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. Speakers: Susan Biesecker-Mast, Donald R. Jacobs, J. Nelson Kraybill, Elmer Martens, Sara Wenger Shenk, Christopher Wright. Contact: Eastern Mennonite Seminary, 540-432-4206 or stutzmal@emu.edu.

Conference on conscientious objectors as noncombatants in the armed forces, March 27, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Contact: William Keeney, 419-358-6017, or Perry Bush, 419-358-3000.

100th anniversary celebration, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Hydro, Okla., March 27-29. Contact: Mildred Slagell, Rt., 1, Box 132, Hydro, OK 73048.

Mennonite Christian educators biennial meeting, April 17-19, Gilmary Retreat Center, Pittsburgh. Speaker: Susanne Johnson. Sponsored by Commission on Education, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and Herald Press Congregational Publishing.

Workers

Atwood, Tim began as pastor at Fairhaven Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., on Feb. 1.

Kaufmann, Lois was licensed and installed as a member of the pastoral team at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind, on Feb. 1.

Shenk, Nelson was ordained as pastor of Boyertown (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Feb. 22.

Wilson, Scot T. ended a pastorate at West Odessa Community Church, Lake Odessa, Mich., on Jan. 25.

Births

Albright, Jordan Dean, Feb. 10, to Jennifer (Cecil) and Michael Albright, Topeka, Kan.

Beidler, Erin Elizabeth, Jan. 24, to Brent and Regina (Lutz) Beidler, Rochester, Vt.

Bontrager, Brandon Lee, Oct. 14, to Daphane (Reno) and Merlin Bontrager, Sarasota, Fla.

Cox, Hannah, Jan. 15, to Karen (Busch) and Kevin Cox, Hartlant, Vt.

Gerig, Martin Isaac, Jan. 27, to Beth (Good) and Kevin Gerig, Mishawaka, Ind.

Glick, Kelly Elizabeth, Jan. 11, to Ron and Sarah (Stinson) Glick, Washington, Ill.

Kauffman, Jeffrey Daniel, Feb. 6, to Dan and Shelley (Martin) Kauffman, Hutchinson, Kan.

Kuepfer, Brendon David, Dec. 3, to Isaac and Marlene (Streicher) Kuepfer, Listowel, Ont.

Lapp, Ellen Marie, Jan. 15, to Karen (Sauder) and Michael Lapp, Coatesville, Pa.

Leaman, Alexander Lee, Jan. 18, to Ann (Helmuth) and Bryan Leaman, Louisville, Ohio.

Lehman, Levi Cole, Jan. 26, to Rachel (Wenger) and Ronnie Lehman, Chesapeake, Va.

Mercier, Haley Elle, Dec. 23, to Angela (Bast) and Joseph Mercier, Cambridge, Ont.

Miller, Jacob Allen, Jan. 18, to Jon and Martha (Nisly) Miller, Hutchinson, Kan.

Peters, Jordan, Dec. 20, to David and Jorene (Harder) Peters, Winnipeg, Man.

Reimer, Johnathan Dale, Feb. 10, to David and Helena (Harder) Reimer, Monkton, Ont.

Reusser, Jesse David Schneider, Jan. 5, to Mark and Mila (Taves) Reusser, Petersburg, Ont.

Schwartz, Dylan John, Feb. 10, to Doug and Kim (Frohriep) Schwartz, Burr Oak, Mich.

Shreiner, Noah Timothy, Feb. 5, to Cheryl (Scheetz) and Timothy Shreiner, Telford, Pa.

Sniffins, David James, Nov. 19, to Anita (Hurley) and Kirby Sniffins, Sarasota, Fla.

Stancato, Jacob Tyler, Feb. 7, to Kimberly (Eller) and Philip R. Stancato, Quakertown, Pa.

Steckly, Jonathan David, Dec. 22, to David and Tammy (Williams) Steckly, Waterloo, Ont.

Trissel, Kyle David, Jan. 29, to Greg and Lory (Linhart) Trissel, Dayton, Va.

Weaver, Daniel Robert, July 21, 1993, received for adoption Feb. 19, 1998, to Cathy (Anders) and John Weaver, Royersford, Pa.

Yoder, Ryan Keith, Feb. 3, to Brian and Linda (Horner) Yoder, Hollsopple, Pa.

Marriages

Byler/Mitchell: Jeanne Byler, Austin, Texas, and Jim Mitchell, Austin, Jan. 18 by Kathy Reid.

Heatwole/Miller: Carmen Heatwole, Harrisonburg, Va., and Chad Miller, Kokomo, Ind., Jan. 31, by T. Lee Miller and Kathy Hochstedler.

Marquis/Rowden: Jeff Marquis, Towanda, Ill., and Debra Rowden, Morton, Ill., Feb. 21, by Verle Brubaker.

Mikel/Stutzman: Stephanie Mikel, Sarasota, Fla., and Kelly Stutzman, Sarasota, Dec. 27, by Don Lafler and Tom Reno.

Ropp/Yoder: Renee Ropp, Sarasota, Fla., and Brian Yoder, Sarasota, Jan. 17, by Duane Yoder.

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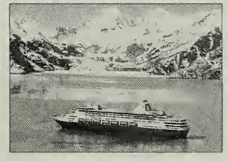

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*Abbotsford, BC	May 15-16, 1998

To register call 219-296-6236 or E-mail: givingproject@prodigy.net

Deaths

Bender, Donna Lou Byler, 69, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 6. Survivors: husband, Merle; children Dawn Jacob, Diane, David, Dirk, Dana; three grandchildren. Cremated.

Brenneman, Mabel Smith, 85, Elida, Ohio, died Jan. 26 of a stroke. Survivors: children William, James, Sharon Miller; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 31 at Elida by Mel Hathaway.

Eigsti, Dorothea Margarethe Abrahams, 97, Morton, Ill., died Jan. 5. Survivors: daughters Joyce Hofer, Carol Eigsti; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial Jan. 7 at Pekin by Doane Brubaker.

Esch, Gladden H., 87, Morton, Ill., died Jan. 27. Survivors: children Doris Borthwick, Nancy Tolnoff, Mary Wilkening; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 31 at Washington, Ill. by Verle Brubaker.

Fletcher, Burton (Dick) Jr., 69, Lyndhurst, Va., died Feb. 7, Survivors: wife, Delano (Pat); children Kevin, Kristi Kanagy, Karen Weeks; mother, Mabel; three grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 10 at Waynesboro, Va., by Alvin Graber, Vance Brydge and Charles Ramsey.

Garber, Esther M., 98, Eureka, Ill., died Feb. 7. Survivors: children Wilda Gingrich, Ferne Onken, Richard, Leslie; 16 grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 10 at Metamora, Ill., by Robert Nolt and Michael Danner.

Gingerich, Malinda Ellen, 91, Croghan, N.Y., died Feb. 4. Survivors: children Beryl, Joan Zehr, Lila; 20 grandchildren; 43 great-grandchildren. Spring burial at Croghan.

Gingerich, Wilma Bender, 80, Wellman, Iowa, died Jan. 24 of complications after surgery. Survivors: husband, Aldine; children Lucy Hostetler, Linda Miller, Leland, Frances Nafziger, Twila Miller, Brenda Stauffer; 23 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 27 at Parnell, Iowa, by David Boshart.

Hess, James H., 86, Willow Street, Pa., died Jan. 24, of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Survivors: wife, Anna; children Esther Becker, James, Ernest, Luke; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 28 at Willow Street by Joe Garber and David Thomas.

Hooley, Orvin H., 87, New Paris, Ind., died Jan. 29. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Linda Hershberger, Mary Beth Engle, David, William, Joe, John; stepson Milton Gibson; 20 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; two stepgrandchildren. Burial: Feb. 1 at Shipshewana, Ind., by Joseph Miller, Martha Kolb-Wyckoff and Marvin Yoder.

Hostetler, Dorothy E. Livengood, 73, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 18. Survivors: husband, Samuel; children Deloris Zehr, Deborah Hochstetler, Donald, Wilbur, Glen, Marvin, Gerald; 17 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 30 at Goshen by Art Smoker and Jerry Wittrig.

Kauffman, Martha Schlabach, 87, Phoenix, Ariz., died Jan. 28. Survivors: children Ellen Yoder, Dorthea Litwiller, Mildred Bellew, Mary Clarkson, Monroe, Joseph; 21 grandchildren; 43 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 31 at Phoenix by Stanley Weaver, Dennis Stauffer and David Mann.

Keller, Norman F., 81, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 11. Survivors: children Esther Cassel, Robert, Stanley, Ray; 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 17 at Franconia, by John Ehst, Steve Landis and Floyd Hackman.

Kenagy, Lois Dorthea Harder, 76, Garden City, Mo., died Jan. 17 of heart failure. Survivors: husband, Orlie; children Verlin, Delbert, Twila Fieker; 14 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 30 at Garden City by Kenneth Steckly and Wilmer Hartman.

King, Willard W., 82, Wauseon, Ohio, died Jan. 17. Survivors: wife, Grace; children Charlene VanPelt, Judy Selzer, Dan; eight grandchildren; three great-children. Burial: Jan. 20 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Rick Jones and Dale Wyse.

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Martin, Helen Gimbel, 80, Cambridge, Ont., died Jan. 27. Survivors: children Sharon, Doug; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 30 at Breslau, Ont., by Laurence Martin.

Mutchler, Oda Senger, 97, North Lawrence, Ohio, died Jan. 25, of heart failure. Survivors: children Ethel, Glenn Jr.; four grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 31 at North Lawrence by John Miller.

Wood, Lillie Mae Hansbrough, 81, Elkton, Va., died Jan. 23. Survivors: husband, Gordon; children Thelma Crawford, Delbert, Vernon, Peggy, Carolyn Kile, Betty Owens, Lois Shifflett, Mary Shifflett, Bonnie Jones, Wanda Plum, Kay Lam; 30 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 28 at Elkton by Harold Lahman and Addona Nissley.

Yoder, Elizabeth, 88, Fairview, Mich., died Jan. 9. Survivors: children Ray, Kenneth; eight grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 12 at Fairview by Randy Detweiler.

Zook, Priscilla Elizabeth, 68, Mill Creek, Pa., died Feb. 1 of cancer. Survivors: parents, John and Emma Zook. Burial: Feb. 4 by Philip Barr.

by Omar Eby

To name with power and beauty

You have blotted out their name forever and ever. . . . And those who know your name put their trust in you.—Psalm 9:5b,10a

I sit at my desk this morning to read a psalm of David, to practice the discipline of meditation. I allow only one hour. I will focus on only one word or phrase or verse and force myself to wrench it into words of clarity and grace from the pool of image, fear, fantasy, memory, longing, pain, guilt or anger that the psalm or line or word has brought to my mind.

To name—with power and beauty—is an act often lost on modern people for whom the perpetual voice of mass media weakens speech. "Adam gave names to every animal in the Garden" (Genesis 2:20). Imagine the divinely invested power to declare: "Thou art a peacock!" and, "This day you are named forever, giraffe!" and, "You? A sperm whale!"

Against such simple declamation falls the chatter—silly, shallow, pompous, deadening—of commentators, talk shows, preachers and pedagogues.

God, whose Name is forever, can unname his creatures: "Blotted out their name forever!" "Depart from me, I never knew you!" How can this be from the One who knows all and is present everywhere? The idea is as incomprehensible as it is chilling to the soul.

The Zimbabwe Ruins show evidence of a people skilled enough to cut stone with such precision it needed no bonding when formed into a 70-foot wall. Then the people disappeared without name or hieroglyphic. At a grave plot in the corner of the alfalfa field on our family's Cearfoss, Md., farm are stones whose names have been obliterated by weather. Blotted out of everyone's memory forever?

I find this consolation against the chill of annihilation: "Those who acknowledge God's name (I Am) may trust." God, what is your name in this century? Among today's heathen? Do I get your name right? Do I say it often enough to my children? To myself?

O God, name me a child that I may never forget thy Name. Abba, Father.

Amen.

Recently published books from Mennonite publishers to help us in our faith:

- *Understanding the Faith from a Mennonite Perspective* by Helmut Harder (Faith & Life Press and CMBC Publications, 1997, $7.50 U.S., $10 Cdn.) is a study guide to the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective;
- *Theological Education on Five Continents: Anabaptist Perspectives*, edited by Nancy R. Heisey and Daniel S. Schipani (Mennonite World Conference, 1997, $15), stems from a conference held in India;
- *Living the Vision: Leadership and Community* by Ken Hawkley and April Yamasaki (Faith & Life Press, 1997, $5.95 U.S., $8.15 Cdn.) is a workbook for following the Vision: Healing and Hope statement;
- *Martyrs Mirror* by Thieleman J. van Braght (Herald Press, 1998, $37.50 U.S., $53.50 Cdn.) is available in a new softcover edition.

Do everything as unto the Lord

"Play skillfully" unto the Lord.—Psalm 33:3

This verse speaks of how one should play a musical instrument before the Lord in public temple worship. But I remember a weekend of watching the university's soccer men on their playing field. They might take this for a year's slogan: "Play skillfully unto the Lord." No doubt each of the young men plays as skillfully as he can. But do young Christian soccer players think of playing as unto God, who sits in a high bleacher? Their camaraderie, their sportsmanship, their skill of foot and limb, head, neck and torso, lung, heart, muscle—all playing unto the Lord?

Soccer is a kind of rugged dance, the illusion better gained from a bit of distance, when I walk across campus and see the men across the street practicing on the turf; the thrust of leg, the pivot on heel, the mid-air twist, the side leg-to-leg skip, the backward canter on toes, the high jump with arched neck and thrust head—danced ruggedly, manfully, skillfully before the Lord.

Do they think of playing skillfully before the Lord, who coaches, admonishes, reigns in, benches, pats on buttock, growls, embraces, cold-shoulders and nourishes? Even an old man who does not play ball or harp, who only walks and writes and watches others at a rugged dance—might he do so skillfully, too, as unto the Lord? At least it is my heart's honest endeavor, hidden away in a room this lovely October day, as I read the first of 50 first-year university student essays.

O Lord, let the young men delight in their youth and play skillfully under your coaching. And let me, too, take some delight as I apply skillfully my scalpel to these jocks' essays. Amen.

I see the men across the street practicing on the turf; the thrust of leg, the pivot on heel, the mid-air twist—danced ruggedly, manfully, skillfully before the Lord.

Word and Spirit will appear once each month. We begin with meditations on the Psalms by Omar Eby, professor of English at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

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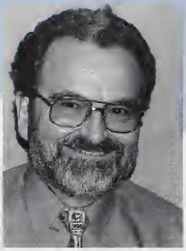

by J. Lorne Peachey

An open letter to my niece

Dear Gwen,

Christmas with your family is always full of surprises. But I wasn't prepared for the one I got in December.

You may remember that, after roast turkey and cherry pie, our conversation went to the new publication I was planning. You asked if the merged *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* would carry births, marriages and deaths. Probably deaths, I said, but we weren't sure about marriages and births. You said, "If you don't, I won't subscribe, and I won't read."

What surprised me most was that you were even paying attention to a denominational magazine. I've been told your generation could not care less. I've also heard that you people in your mid-20s don't pay attention to what I call "census data"—that's supposed to be "old people's stuff" that will soon die out.

But you had so much force and emotion in your response, I had to listen. When I did, I found other young adults like you. Not everyone by any means—but enough to make me stop and reconsider.

Reporting births, marriages and deaths has been a *Gospel Herald* tradition almost from its beginnings. Just a month before your outburst, I also learned that the former *The Mennonite* had carried census data but discontinued it in the mid-1970s—a move one staffer connected with the decision told me was a mistake. Her reasoning: Publishing births, marriages and deaths is one way to build a community.

I also paid attention to the data we got from a telephone survey of 300 members of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC). One of the questions we asked was about births, marriages and deaths. Fully 53 percent of those responding said it was important or very important that the new publication carry deaths. Births and marriages came in at 38 percent. What surprised me more was that the GCs and the MCs weighed in at about the same percentage.

Yet even with these results, the decision to go with what now appears in For the Record was difficult. There are reasons for not publishing this material. The names that appear in this section tend to be those of white middle-class members of the church; conspicuously absent are those from other racial and ethnic groups. Because of the traditions from which we come, currently they are also more from the MC than the GC side of our merging denominations. And people without a long history of friendships within our denominations can feel excluded when they don't recognize names.

The board and staff struggled long with this decision. In fact, it was not until Jan. 20, one month before the first issue, that we finally made up our minds.

We believe a magazine should pay attention to significant events in the lives of its readers.

So why did we decide to go with births, marriages and deaths?

Our hope is to foster community. We believe a denominational magazine should pay attention to the significant events in the lives of its readers—not just what happens to its leaders but also what's important to everyone in the church. For the Record can be an important place for the church community to learn what is happening with each other.

This is an experiment. Will the names that appear in For the Record reflect the diversity of our membership? Will we learn to know each other better—and perhaps increase understanding—because of this information? If this page catches on, will we be able to handle all the information we get?

Those are the questions. We wait for the answers. It will be up to our readers to help us find them.

When I heard your strong reaction that Sunday evening before Christmas, Gwen, I tried to tell myself you'd read this publication regardless of what was in it—just because your uncle edited it. But I knew that wasn't true. The fire in your voice told me otherwise. And that has made a difference.—*jlp*

For the record

All congregations that are part of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church are invited to submit information on births, marriages and deaths of their members to be included in For the Record. We ask that information be no more than two months old and that it be submitted accurately, particularly in the spelling of names.

The Mennonite has forms to guide submission of information to appear in For the Record. Call 1-800-790-2498 for more information.

the Mennonite

March 17, 1998

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the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom

5 Indonesian leader warns of more attacks

6 Boards, commissions hold historic meeting

12 Gardens of justice in barren places

13 Talking as a way to peace

T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

The practice and gift of forgiveness

Except for the verse from the Sermon on the Mount quoted in the beginning, Michael B. Ross' essay on forgiveness (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 24) seems divorced from Christian doctrine and practice. The logic seems to be that the practice of forgiveness is not particularly Christian but something universally useful.

I can't help wonder what the notion of responsibility might mean in a discourse in which the Christian gospel has no place. I was under the impression that we Christians forgave because we have been forgiven.—*Mark McCulley, Ephrata, Pa.*

Michael B. Ross' article put into words much of what has been swirling around inside of me for some time. After reading the article, I realized that the opportunities that I have been given to forgive have been among God's greatest gifts to me.—*Brent Sprunger, Newton, Kan.*

Not changing history

My apologies to Jerry Stanaway (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 24) and anyone else who read that Mennonite World Conference claims the first Anabaptist baptism took place on Jan. 25, 1525. MWC agrees, of course, with the historians who tell us that Jan. 21 was the day. We simply made a typographical error in the World Fellowship Sunday material distributed this year. While MWC has no desire to change history, we do want to correct our mistakes.

MWC encourages all Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches worldwide to celebrate World Fellowship Sunday on the fourth Sunday of each January.—*Larry Miller, executive secretary, Mennonite World Conference, Elkhart, Ind.*

The core of discipline

The proposed Pacific Southwest Conference polity statement does not prevent conference discipline of a congregation, as was reported (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 17). Rather, the statement's intent is to establish the basis for congregations uniting as a conference. The statement seeks to minimize discipline by being explicit about commonly held core values. With respect to discipline, the goal of the statement is to place any such conversation squarely between the congregration and the conference.

Further, the statement seeks to clarify that the functional authority of denominational statements are advisory rather than legislative. The statement does not prevent discipline. It asserts that discipline, should the need ever arise, grows from mutually agreed upon core values that unite Mennonite congregations in Arizona and California for mission.—*Jeff Wright, Pacific Southwest Conference area minister for Southern California, Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.*

Congregational emphasis

Now that we can visualize the shape of the new Mennonite Church, mixed in with the mostly good feelings of anticipation are a few concerns having to do with congregational autonomy and representation. We recognize that both of these sentiments come out of our General Conference Mennonite Church background. As we understand the GC insight into Anabaptism, the congregation has been held to be the operating body of believers.

The expulsion of Germantown Mennonite Church by Franconia Conference over theological differences is of grave concern. Today the issues are sexual orientation, family planning and the place of women in leadership positions. Tomorrow we may be struggling over the interpretation of the Scriptures in regard to cloning, the right to die or other issues we cannot imagine. We do not want to lose congregational autonomy in the discernment of such issues.

If the local congregation is the foundation of the day-to-day church, then every congregation deserves to have a voice and a vote on conference decisions. We fear that we would feel far less ownership and less enthusiasm in a conference where we are represented by someone we do not know and who does not worship with us.—*Current Issues Sunday School Class, Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, Kan.*

Homosexuality and fellowship

Today I was translating a document about the Anabaptists in Langnau, Switzerland, in the late 1600s. After reading a letter to the editor proposing that some churches could avoid expulsion by agreeing to "withdraw quietly and peaceably" (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 24), I thought that is what the Reformed Church of Langnau wished about our forebears. When they would not do this, they were expelled and forced to flee for their lives. Is this the way we want to treat our brothers and sisters in Christ?—*David L. Habegger, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

I was shocked to read the suggestion that homosexual-supporting churches should withdraw and form their own association. I guess that would be one way to deal with a lot of conflicts within the church. Why doesn't everyone that we disagree with about any issue just get out of our churches and our conferences?

the Mennonite

Vol. 1, No. 5, March 17, 1998

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the Mennonite

Incorporating *Gospel Herald* (1908-1998) and *The Mennonite* (1885-1998)

The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998—by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453.

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say readers say

Regardless of stance on homosexuality, this approach does nothing to promote Christian growth or the healthy handling of conflict within our Christian fellowships.—*Joy Kraybill, Raleigh, N.C.*

In reply to Vicki Epp (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 17), let's look at her facts. Her first fact cites research, not saying by whom. I question determination of sexual preference in the womb, though early life experiences can be factors. Her third fact says more than 10 percent of people are gay, lesbian, etc. This includes anyone who has ever had one or two homosexual encounters. Without them, the number plummets closer to 1 percent. Her fourth fact says 30 percent of teen suicides are due to gay / lesbian youth trying to fit in. But there is no valid statistical data to back up this wild claim. Her fifth fact about biblical word use lacks credible citing of exegesis or biblical languages. Her sixth fact is illogical. If the American Psychiatric Association said pedophilia was normal, would Epp want the church to accept it, too?—*Timothy P. Allen, Columbus, Ohio*

I must respond to the false information in Arnold Reimer's letter (*The Mennonite*, Jan. 13). He believes that homosexuality is a learned behavior and is caused by absent fathers, domineering mothers or childhood seduction by pedophiles. The psychoanalytical argument is offensive to me as a lesbian but also to my parents and the other healthy families with gay or lesbian children. My father was not absent, my mother was not domineering, and I thank God that I was never approached by a pedophile.

Reimer also claims lesbian and gay people can be set free from this addiction by contacting ex-gay organizations. There is no such

continued on page 4

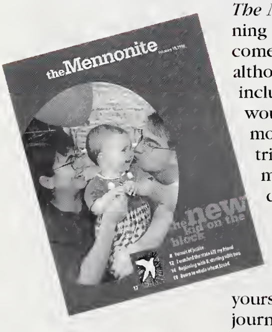
thing as an ex-gay person. The majority of lesbian and gay people who contact ex-gay organizations do so in order to gain acceptance by their churches. They become gay people in straight marriages. The majority realize after about a year that the claims of becoming heterosexual are lies. Ex-gay organizations do a disservice to the church and to lesbian and gay Christians by perpetuating the lie that lesbian and gay Christians must pretend to be straight to be accepted by Christ and the church. *—Jennifer Thiessen, Toronto*

I would question the use of the American Psychiatric Association as an organization to assist with biblical interpretation. This secular body would have little good to say about religion except perhaps as a positive placebo in certain situations. For me, the Bible is a much more reliable source when dealing with religious matters.*—Marlin R. Good, Goshen, Ind.*

Congratulations and concerns

What a joy to receive my first copy of *The Mennonite.* Having this magazine in my hands is a tangible sign of merger. I look forward to the day when the initials MC and GC and the language of "Old" Mennonites are merely faded memories.*—Donald D. Sharp, Davidsville, Pa.*

I was excited to get the first issue of the new *The Mennonite,* marking the historical beginning of perhaps even more exciting things to come. But I was disappointed to see that although the picture of the staff on page 5 included several women, everyone is Anglo. I would hope that in the future you will be more conscious of the importance the contributions people of other races could make. We cannot truly diversify without doing so in all places.*—Deb Hicks, Crestwood, Ill.*



Congratulations for an outstanding premiere issue. You've a high standard for yourselves and for all of us in Mennonite print journalism: great content, tight editing and a clear, attractive look. Your readers, whether fans of *Gospel Herald* or the former *The Mennonite*, are most fortunate. Lead on.*—Don Ratzlaff, editor,* Christian Leader, *Hillsboro, Kan.*

The first issue of *The Mennonite* is a pleasant surprise. It is an attractive magazine with color and clarity. There are two things that bother me: (1) I wonder if we could omit the birth announcements. We are now a larger family, and it will be impossible to get all of them. (2) I was surprised at the number of advertisements. They are all done in good taste. But could we limit the size of each ad?*—Etril Leinbach, Goshen, Ind.*

The first editorial says, "What you see is not necessarily what you'll get." What we hope we will get is darker and possibly larger print. Several people in our retirement community have expressed this need.*—Norman Derstine, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Congratulations on the stunning new publication. I am so delighted to see Mediaculture. The article "I Watched the State Kill My Friend" was a masterpiece and so gut wrenching. I am glad you're continuing the obits because almost every issue has news of another contemporary who has died.*—Dorothy Cutrell, Deland, Fla.*

As supporters of integration, we have looked forward to the two former periodicals being replaced by a new one. You have made a good beginning. But I want to express my disappointment at the quality of paper. Its slick, shiny surface may feel good enough to the hand, but it is hard on the eye. It is so shiny that it reflects a lot of light, making for a lot of difficulty in reading it.*—Conrad Wetzel, Urbana, Ill.*

I am attracted to the upbeat graphics, lively articles, good mix of think pieces, news, photography and columns. If more advertising helps make it possible to inject more creativity, then go for it. I know this new arrival represents long hours of planning, hard work, prayer and some minor miracles along the way. If this is a foretaste of integration, I say all systems go. Yea and amen.*—Jim Bishop, publication information office, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Meeting God through the arts

Four hundred years after the Reformation, Mennonite artists still restrain their creative gifts because of fears that art is an arrogant or impractical expression of faith. A vibrant artistic community is essential to the life and growth of the church. God gives artists—actors, architects, dancers, fiction writers, musicians, painters, poets and preachers—the images by which we identify ourselves and meet God.

I think that now, as the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church face the daunting issues of integration, would be a fortunate time for *The Mennonite* to reexplore the roles art and artists play in the Mennonite church.*—Lowell Brown, Pittsburgh*

Indonesian leader warns more attacks possible

ELKHART, Ind.—The leader of one of Indonesia's three Mennonite conferences is warning his congregations that more attacks and harassment may be forthcoming.

Political uncertainty and a failing economy have led to unrest in the country, and many Indonesians are looking for scapegoats, says Mesach Krisetya, moderator of the Persatuan Gereja-Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI) conference and president of Mennonite World Conference (MWC). He has sent a letter to GKMI congregations, warning them of increasing dangers and that persecution may become more systematic.

In the past two years, more than 100 churches have been burned. In November 1997, a Mennonite church was the target of an attack for the first time. The building was destroyed and one man was injured in the riot. North American churches have sent $1,760 to MWC for rebuilding. Church burnings are continuing, although the government has taken action to stem them, Krisetya says.

Businesses owned by ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are also being targeted for violence by rioters. Chinese make up less than 5 percent of the population but are popularly believed to control more than two-thirds of Indonesia's businesses. Many GKMI members are of Chinese descent.

"Personally, I see this happening as the implication of the economic and political crisis in our country," Krisetya says, adding that the situation is a symptom of deeper and more hidden problems.

The crisis has resulted in skyrocketing food prices, according to reports.

—Marshall V. King of MWC News Service

Russia work continues despite new legislation

Six months after the adoption of a controversial law restricting religious activity in Russia, North American Mennonite mission and service agencies report the legislation has not hampered their work in the country.

Instead, say administrators, efforts are adversely affected by ongoing constraints of culture, bureaucracy and political instability. But they also say it is too early to know what the new law's effects might be.

Legislation passed last September requires religious associations not registered with the Russian government since 1982 to register annually for 15 years before they can evangelize.

In the Muslim region of Dagastan, two Mennonite Board of Missions workers are limited more by Islamic culture than law, says John F. Lapp, who directs West Asia and Middle East programs for MBM and the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM). "The issue is they can't be blatant about their faith," Lapp says.

Elsewhere in Russia, Peter Rempel, COM secretary for Europe and the former Soviet Union, believes size and geography are an advantage. COM supports a newsletter, based in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, sent to about 350 addresses of "ethnic" Mennonites.

"They are just too far out of the way and too small to be noticed," Rempel says.

Mennonite Central Committee overseas program director Ray Brubacher has concerns other than the religious legislation, as taxes and bureaucracy hinder MCC's material resources distribution. "Our material resources staff is seriously considering winding down," he says.

MCC photo by Kevin King

Jenny Bishop, serving with a Mennonite Central Committee young adult service program, poses with two children in a Russian orphanage. Changes in Russian legislation pertaining to church work in the country have not affected Mennonite agencies' effort so far.

A more pressing issue comes on the heels of the recent kidnapping of a United Nations official in the Caucasus in southern Russia, where four MCCers are located. "The safety of our workers . . . is our main concern," Brubacher says.

As the political and religious climate in Russia continues to evolve, Mennonite work may be threatened, says Walter Sawatsky, a professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and expert on the former Soviet Union.

Says Sawatsky, "I'm anticipating numbers of bureaucratic obstructions, harassment . . . as local officials choose to enforce the legislation

Boards, commissions to hold historic first meeting

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—The continuing movement of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) toward merger will take a historic step later this month.

All GC commissions and boards and MC program boards will meet on the campus of Bethel College March 19-24. And this will be the first time the general boards of the two denominations will conduct all their sessions jointly. Commissions, program boards and associate groups will have both separate and joint meetings.

In addition, the expected 300 commission, board and associate group members will join for two plenary sessions.

"We expect to draw together in close fellowship with persons of like mind, faith and vision," says GC general secretary Jim Schrag. "We have been called to create a new denomination for a stronger witness in our world." *—GCMC News Service*

MCC aid better late than never

Uganda food distribution hampered by rebels

KAMPALA, Uganda—When Mennonite Central Committee contributed $10,000 last November to feed people left hungry by northern Uganda's ongoing violence, the relief project was to be completed by Christmas.

It turned out to be more like Valentine's Day.

After months of rebel activity, the distribution of sorghum, millet, beans and cowpea seeds finally finished last month. Some 11,000 people received some form of assistance.

Almost immediately after the gift's arrival last fall, rebel looting, abductions and killings increased. The first challenge for Nicholas Odongpiny and his team from the Church of Uganda headquarters in Kitgum was to buy food and haul it to their headquarters in Kitgum. Odongpiny reports that one truck carrying relief food narrowly missed being ambushed. Other vehicles were attacked later, and several people were killed.

"God was surely with us," Odongpiny says. "It is better not to know the future."

The insecurity made it difficult to plan distribution. It originally had been determined that Paibony was the most needy village. But as the time drew near, the church decided first help should go to the people of Parabongo.

Rebels had attacked Parabongo, burning many houses to the ground, and there were reports of people without food for a week. Odongpiny and his team set out to deliver food. Travel was dangerous. He later heard rebel soldiers were watching passing vehicles, but since he was from the church and not escorted by the army, the team's work was not hampered.

Distributing the food was another challenge. Upon arriving in Parabongo, Odongpiny and his team were met by local government officials who wanted some aid for themselves. When Odongpiny refused, he and his team of seven were left to do all the work themselves; local officials normally would have helped.

Odongpiny

The team worked hard throughout the day and into the night. "We were so thankful for the moonlight that night," says Odongpiny. By around 10 p.m., the truck was empty.

The recipients were grateful for the aid. They were also impressed with the lack of corruption. "You brought a truck full of food, and we saw that you emptied it and gave it to the people," they said.

Parabongo received more than $4,800 worth of food and seeds, which assisted some 7,000 people for two weeks. The seeds were planted, but the rains stopped before they matured. Many people ate the immature crop as greens.

The remainder of the food, mostly sorghum, was distributed in the originally designated village of Paibony as well as given to people from other needy areas. Several people came on bicycles to collect the food, despite danger from the rebels.—*Mary Lou Klassen for MCC News Service*

The 11-year conflict in northern Uganda continues as the rebel Lord's Resistance Army loots and burns villages and abducts children. It is unclear if the government, the rebels and local leaders will be able to negotiate a settlement.

Food aid is sporadic because of the insecure, unpredictable situation. At the same time, the El Nino weather system has produced drought in northern Uganda.

Now there is talk of the government arming local people so they can defend themselves against the rebels. This is causing grave concern among church leaders and others working for a nonviolent and just resolution to the conflict.—*Mary Lou Klassen for MCC News Service*

Elevating God above worship diversity

Symposium blends conservative, traditional styles

LANCASTER, Pa.—Vinnie Rondinelli had a confession to make: During a Feb. 27-28 worship symposium, he had walked into a workshop on the use of hymns in worship and nearly walked out again, he told the 400-plus symposium participants gathered at Neffsville Mennonite Church.

"What do I know about hymns, coming where I come from—all that stuff about two-two and four-four time?" said Rondinelli, a former Catholic from Staten Island, N.Y., who now belongs to a Mennonite congregation.

"I didn't sing hymns while growing up, but I think they're important. And that's why I came all the way down here from the city. I wanted to see all the different styles of worship, to get a blend of all different kinds of music. Isn't that what we're doing here?"

The symposium—sponsored by the Atlantic Coast, Eastern District and Lancaster conferences—drew participants from 10 area conferences of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church plus Brethren in Christ and Church of the Brethren congregations.

The event strove to foster a greater sense of God-directed worship and blend different worship styles in the increasingly diverse Anabaptist community.

"Worship, the very event that should be binding us together in the body of Christ, is playing havoc within our midst," said keynote speaker Dennis Hollinger, dean of college ministries and professor of Christian ethics at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. "Some churches are being torn apart in what is being called the war over worship, and there are all kinds of tensions being created over disagreements about diverse forms and styles."

When conflicts arise, he said, people tend to focus on one aspect of human experience in worship—such as beauty, feelings, rationality or structures—and end up in idolatrous worship of the experience, rather than worshiping God.

"Whenever we elevate and make central the human, cultural, temporal and finite, we make them our god, rather than the living God," Hollinger said.

In one of the symposium's 23 workshops, Bonnie Ritrovata moved passionately on stage to the words from a song based on Psalm 95 as Lancaster Mennonite High School choral students sang the composition she was interpreting.

Some congregations are starting to explore creative movement in worship, an idea that is new to some Anabaptists and once found a lot of closed doors, Ritrovata said. She shares her ministry at her home congregation, Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church, and elsewhere.

Being a pioneer in a ministry that pushes old boundaries has its pressures, Ritrovata said. During her workshop, one of the participants in the room was a 71-year-old member of her home congregation. The older member, who asked not to be identified, had reservations about the use of creative movement in worship and had come to the workshop to learn more about it.

"I think the movements are lovely, graceful," she said. "But when I concentrate on what a beautiful sight it is . . . I lose some of the spiritual focus.

"I guess I have to go to a few more workshops and talk more with Bonnie before I make up my mind."—*Laurie L. Oswald of* Mennonite Weekly Review

Sunday sermons: feast or famine?

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." So how is the menu at your church? We're talking about sermons here. Are you getting a snack? Junk food? Leftovers? A feast?

"I would describe Mennonite preaching as undercooked home cooking," said June Alliman Yoder, professor of communication and preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. She meant it is nourishing and prepared with careful thought for those who will eat it—but without enough time to cook it right.

Yoder, speaking on "The State of the Mennonite Pulpit," was one of the presenters at a symposium on preaching held Feb. 22-24 at Bethel College.

"Mennonite preachers like to preach and enjoy sermon preparation," Yoder said. "But what frustrates them is a lack of time to prepare."

Combine a pastor's shortage of time with a congregation's high expectations and short attention span, and you have the recipe for a challenge.

"Our congregations have a reduced ability to concentrate," Yoder said. "A five- to seven-minute homily is all they can handle."

That kind of sermon, she said, is a snack.

Yoder continued through a menu of food analogies: A junk-food sermon is short on scriptural content. Carry-out is borrowing someone else's sermon. A buffet sermon lacks focus—it has too many good things. A pastor is serving leftovers when the congregation gets the same thing too often.

The ideal sermon, Yoder said, is the feast. It is carefully prepared and exquisitely presented. It takes everyone's needs into account and is delivered with joyful language, sterling images and passion.

But you can't expect a feast every week, she said. Well-cooked home cooking is good, regular fare.

The symposium drew about 100 participants, mostly pastors who are experiencing changing influences on their sermons. "There are higher expectations now than there were 15 to 20 years ago in the area of preaching," said Marvin Zehr, Western District Conference minister. "For many people, it's their primary or only contact with the pastor."—*Paul Schrag and Melanie A. Zuercher for GCMC News Service*

Federation plan could turn three Winnipeg schools into Canadian church's first bachelor of arts college

WINNIPEG—The first Canadian Mennonite institution to grant bachelor of arts degrees has moved closer to reality.

Plans to join Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Concord College and Menno Simons College, all in Winnipeg, into a "federation" have been approved by two of the three school's owners. The Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference, Concord's owner, approved the federation plan last month. Menno Simons, an independent, inter-Mennonite program of the University of Winnipeg, has also signed off on the plan. CMBC is owned by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, which will vote on the proposal at its annual sessions July 8-12.

If approved, the three schools would take ownership of a provincial school for the deaf campus in the summer of 1999. In a January agreement with the Manitoba government, the province will sell to the federation the school facilities in Winnipeg, provide a subsidy and enact necessary legislation for the federation to grant degrees.

CMBC president Gerald Gerbrandt says the plan is to have the three schools maintain their separate identities under the tentative umbrella name of Mennonite College Federation. But he said there are many issues yet to be resolved, such as whether all three schools and / or the federation would grant degrees and whether students would have to enroll in any of the three schools or could enroll as federation students.

But the idea, Gerbrandt says, is to offer a "seamless experience" for students, comparing it to the former Goshen and Mennonite biblical seminaries in Elkhart, Ind., which for years existed as virtually one institution under the banner of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

CMBC and Concord are Bible schools, offering degrees such as bachelor of theology and bachelor of church music. Menno Simons does not grant degrees but offers programs in conflict resolution and international development at the University of Winnipeg.

Gerbrandt says the federation has "roots in the Bible school tradition . . . with aspects of [U.S.] liberal arts education."

Plans call for the federation to offer majors in Christian studies, music, conflict resolution, international development and organizational leadership, Gerbrandt says, while majors in other disciplines would be offered through association with area universities. All students would be required to take 30 hours of religion courses.—*Rich Preheim with a report from* Canadian Mennonite

The idea is similar to Goshen and Mennonite biblical seminaries, which made up Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

Alaskan agencies depend on service workers

MBM photo by Tom Price

Mary Garboden provides music during a worship service at Prince of Peace Mennonite Church in Anchorage, Alaska. Garboden, from Goshen, Ind., came to Anchorage as a member of a Service Adventure unit and stayed in the community after her term to work with an addiction treatment center.

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—When Nichole Fanning finished her Service Adventure term in December 1997, she didn't return home to Shipshewana, Ind. She stayed with the American Red Cross in Anchorage.

"I love the people I'm working with," Fanning says. "I'm used to being looked at as a kid. They treat me as an equal. I have a lot more responsibility than I thought I would have. I thought I would be just filing and answering phones."

What she did during her 10-month assignment was coordinate health fairs, help respond to emergencies and provide communications support.

The Anchorage Service Adventure unit is only a year old, but it has already made an impact in the community. Each of the five volunteers have received high praise from their supervisors, who found that the 18- to 20-year-olds offered more than anticipated.

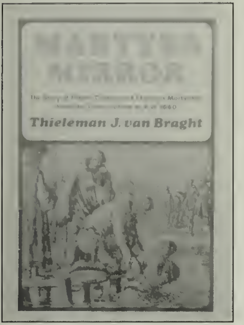
Joanne Moyer of Lethbridge, Alta., provided essential clerical support for a foundation serving Alaska's Native peoples. "We have grown so dependent on this person and what she does for us that we're going to have to create this position," says office manager Jaylene Peterson.

In Alaska's vast frontier, where independence is among the most valued virtues, this kind of dependence surprised the volunteers' supervisors.

"My fear is I'm going to become too dependent," one supervisor says of Emilee Bender, of Breslau, Ont. "She can do things without always asking what needs to be done. There aren't a lot of people like that around. I'm afraid that when she leaves, I'm going to fall apart."

Service Adventure is a program of Mennonite Board of Missions and the Commission on Home Ministries.—*Tom Price of MBM News Service*

Martyrs Mirror



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Church leader shares vision for India

NEWTON, Kan.—A fable he learned in childhood about a lion and a mouse still sticks with Jai Prakash Masih: A mouse begs a lion to let him go, promising that someday he will be able to return the favor. The lion is scornful but sets the mouse free. Later, when the lion is caught in a net, the mouse saves him by gnawing the ropes.

Masih likes this story because of its theme of "insignificant ones who made a difference," he says. Masih, an Indian Mennonite leader, says the Christian church in India—representing a small minority of the country's nearly 1 billion people—is like that.

The General Conference Mennonite Church began its work in India in 1900. Today, a number of institutions, including schools and hospitals, are testimony to "a small, unknown group with a wide-ranging influence," says Masih, a member of the Bharatiya General Conference Mennonite Church (BGCMC).

Masih, whose name became known to many North American Mennonites after he served as emcee for the Mennonite World Conference gathering in Calcutta in January 1997, recently spent several weeks in North America.

Masih went to Jagdeeshpur, a center of Mennonite mission work, as a boy when his father, a carpenter, was hired to help build Bethel Mennonite Church there. He is a product of Jansen Memorial School in Jagdeeshpur and graduated from Union Biblical Seminary in Pune. He has served pastorates in Janjir and Korba and works full time for the Evangelical Fellowship of India.

For several years, the BGCMC has been involved in a leadership struggle—two men have both claimed to be the rightful leader of the conference—which has now resulted in a lawsuit.

"This is affecting the spiritual life of our congregations because we are losing pastors," Masih says. "We are losing young people because this is setting a bad example for them. It's a bad testimony to the wider community as well. And it's wasting a lot of money in court."

Although he sees no immediate solution to the BGCMC leadership impasse, Masih remains optimistic. "There is a tremendous movement toward mission in India," he says. "We are seeing many churches sending out missionaries and young people becoming involved.

"Just like watering a tree results in growth, the amount of ministry we invest will result in growth."—*Melanie A. Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

We are seeing many churches sending out missionaries and young people becoming involved.

—Jai Prakash Masih

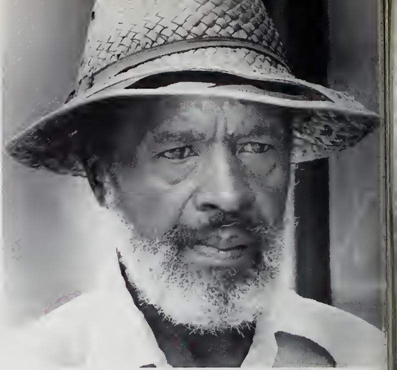
Beginnings
a tM series

Fear God

The first step in the spiritual life

by Lois Barrett

[God] has sent redemption
 to his people;
he has commanded his
 covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his
 name.
The fear of the Lord is the
 beginning of wisdom.
All those who practice it
 have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever.
—Psalm 111:9-10, NRSV



"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." How odd a statement in the midst of a dominant culture that values feeling good and generally tries to avoid anything "negative" like fear! And who wants to be afraid of God? Aren't we trying to get away from images of a stern God of wrath who might punish us? How can the fear of God be a first step in gaining wisdom and growing spiritually?

The word for fear means different things in different contexts within the Bible. The first is "terror or fright in the face of danger," as in Amos 3:8, "The lion has roared—who will not fear?" Sometimes, the people of Israel are afraid of enemies in war. In Exodus 14:10, when the Egyptian army is advancing on the people of Israel, they cried out to God "in great fear." The Bible does not glorify this kind of fear. In fact, God's word in such situations is often, "Do not be afraid. I am with you" (Exodus 14:13-14; Isaiah 41:10,13,14).

A fear that is reverence: A second biblical meaning of fear is "awe or reverence." For example, Psalm 130:4: "But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered [feared]." Acts 2:43: "Awe [fear] came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles." This kind of fear has to do with amazement, or being frightened because of experiencing something out of the ordinary, something we do not understand. When Jesus walked on water, the disciples were afraid (Mark 6:50). When Daniel saw a magnificent vision, his first reaction was fear (Daniel 10:7-12). When people encountered angels, they were afraid at first. But the angels' responses were almost always, "Do not be afraid."

The third biblical meaning of fear is political. In the ancient Near East, rulers usually had the power of life and death over their subjects, so that some kings in particular might have been feared in the first sense of the word. Over time, fearing the ruler came to mean "giving allegiance to the ruler," "wanting to please the ruler," "being a loyal subject or servant of the ruler" or "obeying the laws of the ruler."

In both the Old and New Testaments the primary use of "fear" has to do with the fear of God as political leader. Throughout the Bible, God is proclaimed as ruler, sovereign, king, lord of hosts, the one who establishes a covenant. Thus the people of God are to "fear" God—to be loyal subjects of God, to give their full allegiance and to do what God commands (Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 8:6; 1 Samuel 12:24; Revelation 14:7).

Fearing God alone is important because other rulers and lords also demand people's fear and allegiance. Deuteronomy 6:13 instructs the people to fear God, not the gods of the peoples all around them. The people are to fear God only, not prophets, seers or dreamers (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). To fear God is the opposite of idolatry.

With trembling kiss his feet: The king of Israel is to fear God (Deuteronomy 17:19), and Psalm 2 exhorts all the rulers of the earth to "serve the Lord with fear, with trembling kiss his feet." Psalm 33:8 says, "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."

In the New Testament as well, the fear of the one true God is contrasted with fear of human rulers. First Peter 2:16-17 calls Christians "servants [subjects] of God." They are to honor the emperor as they are to honor everyone. But only God are they to fear.

Even when Christians suffer for what is right, they should not fear but have Christ as Lord (1 Peter 3:14-15). Such fear of the Lord has been a source of courage and comfort in times of persecution—from the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah, who "feared God [and] did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them" (Exodus 1:17), to persecuted Anabaptists in 16th-century Europe.

Peter Riedeman, an early Hutterite leader, wrote from an Austrian prison sometime between 1529 and 1532 on the "seven pillars of the house of God": "The first pillar of this house is the pure fear of God, for as it is written, 'The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.' Against this pillar beat the mighty wind and damaging water of the fear of men, showing us how Christians are treated. The king and his lords will not tolerate you: they will drive you from house and home, wife and children, take everything that is yours, and rob you of your life as well. [People] say, 'Oh, you will never hold out against such things; leave well enough alone and be content.' We must withstand this, however, in the fear of God, and must fear God more than men" (from *Love Is Like Fire: The Confession of an Anabaptist Prisoner*).

This fear of God, acknowledging God as our only ruler and walking in God's ways, is the foundation of the spiritual life. We may do all the good deeds we can, but without giving our allegiance to God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, we have not yet begun the Christian life. We can believe that there is a God somewhere (as over 90 percent of people in North America tell pollsters they do), but until we choose loyalty to God over loyalty to all the other gods around us, we have not taken the first step in the spiritual journey. We may have enough self-esteem to move mountains of emotional burdens, but until we come to the place of knowing our need for God, we can do nothing spiritually.

The Anabaptists who spoke German called it "Gelassenheit"—surrender, letting go, putting oneself completely into the hands of God, letting God be in charge of our lives.

This is the fear of God. We are to give our complete allegiance to God, not to other people, not to governments, not to the powers and institutions of the world. We are to worship God alone, not the idols of the dominant culture, which one congregation has described as "Mars, Mammon and Me" (militarism, consumerism and individualism). Since God is in charge of us, we are called to do what God tells us to do.

Freed from fear: By fearing God, we are freed from fear of all the other people and things that try to frighten us. We are freed even from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nothing need make us afraid because we have put our trust in God.

Until we have chosen to fear God, to let God be in charge of us, to let God be the One we will try to please, we will not get far along the spiritual journey. We will be blown to and fro by various temptations and pseudogods. The fear of God is the foundation of all further spiritual progress.

While the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, it is not the last word. Jesus taught much about being a servant, or subject, of God, but to his disciples he said: "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends" (John 15:15). Romans 8:15-17 says that we are not only servants; we are children of God.

Our God is holy, majestic, far beyond understanding, and, at the same time, God loves us far beyond our capacity to receive that love.

In the midst of the surrounding culture, too often we try to get to the son or daughter relationship with God without being servants of God. We want love without covenant, without discipleship, without standing in awe of God's holiness. We want the rewards of the blessed without having to think about the rewards of the wicked. We want a warm-fuzzy God, not the untamed lion Aslan (in C.S. Lewis' fantasy series *The Chronicles of Narnia*).

Love and holiness are not opposites. *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* does not try to set these attributes of God against each other. It says, "God's awesome glory and enduring compassion are perfect in holy love." Those who have not found the "beginning of wisdom" try to find holiness in just following the rules—or they try to find love without commitment to following Jesus.

True wisdom lies in uniting the fear of God and the love of God. At the beginning of the spiritual journey, this often seems like paradox. We alternate between fear and love, obedience and love. We see God's holiness and God's mercy, but not at the same time. We don't see how they fit together.

We can believe that there is a God somewhere (as over 90 percent of people in North America say they do), but until we choose loyalty to God over loyalty to all the other gods, we have not taken the first step in the spiritual journey.

As we progress along the spiritual path, we begin to see that love and holiness are one. To love God is to obey God (John 15:10). To obey God is to love God (John 14:15). Both are true. As we fear God by letting God be in charge and doing what God commands, we are more able to receive God's love and love God in return. Knowing and obeying, loving and fearing God reinforce each other.

Psalm 25:14 says, "The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes his covenant known to them." Likewise, Menno Simons in the 16th century described true Christian faith as that which praises God through "loving fear and fearing love" (*Complete Works of Menno Simon*). Love and fear become one as we draw closer to God and want both to love and to do God's will.

Anabaptist writer Dirk Philips called the fear of God a gift of the Holy Spirit. The true fear of the Lord, he said, is seeking to do the will of God in order to please God. From this comes acknowledging God. Out of such acknowledgment comes faith, through which we become God's children, becoming formed into the divine image. When we are thus united with God, then we must love God in confidence and hope. Thus fear of God leads to the love of God.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and love is wisdom's completion. With fear and trembling, we place our whole lives into the hands of God and, in doing so, discover that those hands are the hands of love.

Lois Barrett is executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

CPT photo

A daily threat: Christian Peacemaker Teams members Sara Reschly (left) from Tucson, Ariz., and Roger Reinhard from Havixbeck, Germany, help build a wall for a Palestinian home that has been demolished.

Gardens of justice in barren places

by Sue Klassen

After days and nights of relentless rain, we awoke to see the water in our backyard stream rushing just inches from our 20-foot-long footbridge. Only islands of trees were visible in our flooded woods. Ten-year-old Nathan ran to rescue the wood pile near the stream edge. He carried armloads of wood across the stream to the safety of our high deck.

"I was walking down the hill to go across our bridge again," Nathan says, "when I saw a huge log coming down our stream. I stopped in my tracks." The log, over a foot in diameter, with a root ball twice that size, hit our wooden bridge hard. Rotting posts broke. One post held firm; the bridge pivoted on it, and swung to the side of the stream.

> **Alone, we are helpless, watching the flood of destruction sweep away hundreds of Palestinian homes. But God is more powerful yet. God works through our mustard seeds of faith to grow gardens of justice in barren places.**

Nathan shouted for us, distraught. Through tears, he pointed to the battering ram racing round the stream bend. We stood helpless against the mighty force of the raging waters.

I remember all this as I read a profile of the Jaber family near Hebron. We are paired with the Jabers through Christian Peacemaker Teams' (CPT) Campaign for Secure Dwellings (see page 13). Five demolition orders have been issued on the Jaber's home since 1995.

Their family has lived on this land for hundreds of years and has documents of ownership dating from the Ottoman Empire. But their land is on the edges of two expanding Israeli settlements. Their petitions for building permits and justice fall on the stony ears of an unjust system. Bulldozers have flattened $1,000 worth of stone terraces Atta Jaber made. Over $20,000 worth of their cabbages and grape vines were destroyed when a bypass road to connect Israeli settlements was built through their land. Atta Jaber refused "the insulting $66 compensation" for land and $14,000 worth of cabbages.

In the profile, CPT member Sara Reschly writes: "Fear, an intense feeling of solid, real fear, ran through my body. I was so scared as I saw the big bulldozer unloading in front of Atta Jaber's home." Rodina, Atta's wife, mother of their two preschoolers, grabbed Sara's hand, trembling.

"At that moment," Sara writes, "the antiseptic number of 700 homes to be demolished in the West Bank became real for me." The Jabers home was not demolished that day, only a neighbor's summer house. But homes of relatives and friends have been. The threat is a daily reality. "It is hard enough to see your bridge go," Nathan says, "but your house. …"

We sit, trying to imagine. Each night we pray for the Jabers. We pray that their home will be protected. We pray for our government to pressure Israel to stop the demolitions. Alone, we are helpless, watching the flood of destruction sweep away hundreds of Palestinian homes. But God is more powerful yet. God works through our mustard seeds of faith to grow gardens of justice in barren places. This gives us hope.

Sue Klassen lives in Webster, N.Y.

CPT photo

Low-level harassment: Christian Peacemaker Teams member Cliff Kindy (right) from North Manchester, Ind., observes Israeli soldiers as they check Palestinian cars and drivers.

Talking as a way to peace

by Sara Reschly

There is a checkpoint on the border of the Palestinian-controlled area of Hebron and the Israeli occupied zone. One afternoon, Cliff Kindy, Pierre Shantz and I arrived at the checkpoint to find five to 10 Israeli soldiers checking almost every Palestinian car passing through the checkpoint. A car check consists of soldiers looking at the driver's ID and insurance, then physically searching the car and opening any bags or boxes they find.

I began taking pictures of the soldiers. After a few minutes, one soldier looked up and said, "I'm not doing anything wrong."

I said, "I will let the people who see these pictures make their own decisions."

"You know, I could be doing a lot worse," he said. "Why are you taking pictures of this? This is nothing. Much worse happens."

I said: "When I talk to North Americans about the situation in Hebron, I explain that there are many levels of violence. I consider this low-level harassment. Look what you are doing. You are stopping innocent civilians for no reason—making them wait for 15 to 30 minutes while you check cars."

He stepped closer to me and said in a serious tone: "I don't like to do this, believe me, but I have to follow orders. I cannot tell you why, but we have our reasons for stopping Arabs today."

Our conversation continued, each of us giving our political opinions. He explained that before he entered the army, he had volunteered with political parties that were working for peace.

I asked him if he is still involved with them. He said: "No, because there will be no peace in our time. We cannot trust the Arabs. They lie. Arabs are liars. They lie without even realizing they are lying."

"I live in the Arab market and have many Palestinian friends. It has been my experience that they are honest," I said. We talked for another 10 minutes, then I noticed that Pierre and Cliff were engaged in conversations with four other soldiers present.

All the soldiers busy talking to us were no longer stopping cars and checking IDs. The soldier talking to Cliff also realized what was going on and said, "Maybe this is the way to peace, through talking."

Sara Reschly, 25, is a member of the Christian Peacemaker Corps and has been a member of the Hebron Christian Peacemaker Team in the West Bank for the past year.

Campaign for secure dwellings

Christian Peacemaker Teams is still looking for North American families, churches and organizations who wish to be partners with Palestinian families facing home demolitions. If you are interested in becoming a partner, contact the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) Chicago office, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680, 312-455-1199; fax 312-666-2677, email CPT@igc.org, web site http://www.prairienet.org/cpt/. You will receive a packet, "Campaign for Secure Dwellings," explaining why the Israeli government is demolishing Palestinian homes in the West Bank, invitations from Palestinian homeowner Atta Jaber and Israeli peace organizations to participate in the campaign, and numbers and addresses for contacting U.S., Canadian and Israeli officials. Should you choose to become more involved after receiving the packet, CPT will ask that you send photos and a profile of your family and church. The team in Hebron will then match you with a Palestinian family facing home demolition, and you will receive their photos and profiles along with instructions on how to advocate on their behalf.
—*Kathleen Kern*

MDS floods Manitoba with record response

CALGARY—The Mennonite Disaster Service response to last year's flooding of the Red River Valley in Manitoba has resulted in MDS's largest disaster recovery operation ever, Canadian director Abe Ens reported at the MDS annual all-unit meeting last month.

The flood, caused by the melting of last winter's record snowfall and followed by spring rains, covered 1,000 square miles of Manitoba, requiring 25 million sandbags, damaging 3,200 homes and causing 28,000 people to be evacuated. MDS was the overall response coordinator, assisted by Habitat for Humanity, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and other agencies.

One hundred families are still out of their homes. MDS plans to rebuild 12 to 15 homes this year and still needs volunteers.—*MCC News Service.*

Virginia congregation pledges keys to driving

HARRISONBURG, Va.—As eight 16-year-olds at Community Mennonite Church prepare to head down the road of life with new driver's licenses, their congregation wants them to know more than just the rules of the road.

In a Feb. 22 ceremony during the worship service, the youth, their parents and the congregation pledged "to journey together and [trust] God to guide us, keep us safe and bring us home."

The eight teenagers also received a keychain containing a quarter "in case you ever have to call home," Jane H. Peifer of the congregation's pastoral team told them.

Bluffton inducts new hall of fame members

BLUFFTON, Ohio—The Bluffton College career scoring leaders in men's and women's basketball and a football All-America selection were inducted into the school's athletic hall of fame Feb. 14.

Pete DuMonte, class of 1987, holds more school basketball records than any other player, including points (2,416), career points-per-game average (23) and season points-per-game average (27.1). Jane Bruner, class of 1986, scored 1,113 points during her college basketball career and was also a volleyball standout. Football defensive lineman Sylvester Moore, class of 1976, is one of three Bluffton players ever named first- or second-team All-America.

Also entering the hall of fame in the team category were the 1965-66 men's basketball team and the 1981-82 women's basketball team, both of which posted the best winning percentages in school history.

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EMM youth program participation doubles

SALUNGA, Pa.—Participation in an Eastern Mennonite Missions youth urban service program is expected to double in 1998.

In 1997, 215 people from 14 groups participated in EMM's Kingdom Teams, or K-Teams. But as of March 1, 1998, more than 550 people from 31 groups had registered. Unlike last year, when half of the groups were from Lancaster Conference, most 1998 groups are from constituent congregations, although several are from other Mennonite Church conferences, and at least one is from a General Conference Mennonite Church congregation.

Due to the increase in participation, Birmingham, Ala., has joined Harrisburg, Pa., and Baltimore as K-Team locations. Assignments last from two days to one week and include service projects, worship and recreation. —*EMM News Service*

MVSer arrested in Ash Wednesday protest

WASHINGTON—Joni S. Sancken, a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker in Richmond, Va., spent time in jail on Ash Wednesday after she and three other protesters were arrested Feb. 25 outside the White House where they were protesting the United Nations sanctions against Iraq. Charged with protesting without a proper permit, Sancken was fined $50. —*GCMC and MBM News Services*

Events

"One People, Many Stories: Charting the Next Generation of Mennonite Historical Study in the United States and Canada" symposium, May 7-9, Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C. Contact: Perry Bush, bushp@bluffton.edu.

75th anniversary celebration, Morning View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., May 10. Contact: Sara Kreider, 1858 Mount Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22802.

The Giving Project Gathering, April 24-25, Deep Run East Mennonite Church, Perkasie, Pa. Contact: 219-296-6236, GivingProject@Prodigy.net.

Workers

Diener, Obed of Harrisonburg, Va., has started a one-year assignment with Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) as a paralegal in Harlingen, Texas.

Hochstedler, Mark of Harrisonburg, Va., has started a one-year assignment with MVS as a peace worker in St. Louis.

Miller-Eshelman, Chet has been named associate pastor at Capital Christian Fellowship, Laurel, Md.

Rolon, Eileen of Aibonito, Puerto Rico, has started a two-year MVS assignment as a social services staff member in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Sancken, Joni of Tolono, Ill., has started a one-year MVS assignment with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Richmond, Va.

Swartzendruber, Keith of Glen Ellyn, Ill., has started a one-year MVS assignment as a Mennonite Central Committee United Nations peace intern in New York.

Yaeger, Rebecca of Carlock, Ill., has started a one-year MVS assignment at a community radio station in La Jara, Colo.

Births

Barragon, Isabel Yvonne, Feb. 13, to Cindy (Guzman) and Josué Barragan, Hemet, Calif.

Bender, Jacob Paul, Jan. 21, to Gregory and Karen (Brenneman) Bender, Woodstock, Ont.

Berry, Brandon Ira, Feb. 13, to Sarah (Rich) and Todd Berry, Archbold, Ohio.

Bontrager, Bradley Lamar, Nov. 8, to Burdette and Carolyn (Showalter) Bontrager, Harrisonburg, Va.

Brooks, Colin Thomas, Jan. 29, to Dennis and Sheri Brooks, Siauliu Rajonas, Lithuania.

Crook, Brittany Nicole, Jan. 31, to Janet (Ebersol) and Kenneth Crook, Elkhart, Ind.

Crum, Jenna Celesta Lee, Feb. 8, to Brenda (VanPelt) and Scott Crum, Columbiana, Ohio.

Curtis, Sharon Elizabeth, Feb. 6, to Bill and Linda (Rilling) Curtis, Worcester, Pa.

Del Gallo, Peter Aaron, Feb. 17, to Richard and Stacy (Mann) Del Gallo, Gardiner, Maine.

Dombach, Taylor Scott, Jan. 30, to Kristen (Martin) and Scott Dombach, Lancaster, Pa.

Donovan, Samuel Esmonde, Feb. 15, to Jill and Richard Donovan, Suffolk, Va.

Gottfried, Mary Susan, Jan. 17, to Erik and Rosella (Hershberger) Gottfried, Harrisonburg, Va.

Gustavson, Padgett Yoder, Feb. 6, to Kristen (Yoder) and Leif Gustavson, Chester Springs, Pa.

Haggard, Lydia Brubaker, Feb. 3, to Jonathan and Winnie (Brubaker) Haggard, Philadelphia.

Hofer, Ian Michael, Feb. 5, to Jill (Wiebe) and Stan Hofer, Freeman, S.D.

Kauffman, Jeremiah John, Feb. 28, to Dawn (Stutzman) and Ron Kauffman, Wauseon, Ohio.

Kempton, Mandi Lynn, Feb. 19, to Carol (Wesselhoeft) and Glendon Kempton, Logan, Ohio.

Kenagy, Corey Isaac, Feb. 5, to Allan and Kristin (Tursack) Kenagy, Albany, Ore.

King, Abigail Marie, Jan. 27, to Bruce and Patricia (Martin) King, Burlington, Vt.

Klassen, Aaron Frank, Sept. 20, 1997, received for adoption Jan. 9, 1998, by Jeffrey and Kathleen (Zook) Klassen, Hillsboro, Ore.

Knepp, Xena Marie, Feb. 13, to LaVerda (Coblentz) and Ryan Knepp, Iowa City, Iowa.

Kratz, Josiah Curtis, Jan. 5, to Lolly (Benner) and Ron Kratz, York, Pa.

Lengacher, Elizabeth Kristine, Feb. 20, to Jan (Kolb) and Rick Lengacher, Goshen, Ind.

Mahone, Thomas Lucian III, Feb. 17, to Jenny (Shenk) and Thomas Mahone, Newport News, Va.

Marks, Morgan Dean, Jan. 4, to Gail and William Marks, Lowville, N.Y.

Meyer, Kyler Keith, Feb. 17, to Melissa (Burden) and Ryan Meyer, Wayland, Iowa.

Neufeldt, Jillian Adrianna, Jan. 30, to Freda (Burkholder) and Quinton Neufeldt, Markham, Ont.

Peddigree, Jared Clyde, Feb. 10, to Deneen (Derstine) and Gerald Peddigree, Telford, Pa.

Peters, Brenna Nicole, Jan. 21, to Gordon and Janice (Roth) Peters, Hesston, Kan.

Rice, Michaela Quinn, Jan. 8, to Shawn and Susan (Grau) Rice, Lowville, N.Y.

Robbins, Katelyn Marie, Feb. 12, to Kain and Kim Robbins, Lancaster, Pa.

Rush, Austin Ray and Kordell Bruce (twins), Jan. 10, to Connie (Hager) and Dale Rush, Silverdale, Pa.

Schaupp, David Edward, Feb. 18, to Cindi (Kanagy) and Darren Schaupp, Nairobi, Kenya.

Schopp, Collin Joseph, Feb. 18, to Dan and Marcia (Oswald) Schopp, Danvers, Ill.

Skudneski, Palmer Stutzman, Feb. 14, to David and Kerry (Stutzman) Skudneski, Littleton, Colo.

Slabaugh, Johnna Marie, Feb. 17, to Candy (Mishler) and John Slabaugh, New Paris, Ind.

Stauffer, Desirae Summer, Feb. 13, to Bonnie (Stoltzfus) and Johann Stauffer, Lancaster, Pa.

Stoner, Joshua David, Dec. 17, to Barry and Brenda Stoner, Baltimore.

Waidelich, Clay Aubry, Feb. 18, to Lee and Shawn (Campbell) Waidelich, Wauseon, Ohio.

Willis, Violet Alexandra, Feb. 4, to Bruce and Candace (Miller) Willis, Harrisonburg, Va.

Winter, Sadie Ann, Feb. 4, to Juli and Perry Winter, Hesston, Kan.

Yoder, Ryan Keith, Feb. 3, to Brian and Linda (Horner) Yoder, Hollsopple, Pa.

Zehr, Thoreau Joseph, Dec. 4, to Diane (Shenk) and Kenton Zehr, Joppa, Md.

Marriages

Bergey/Eichorn: Roy Bergey, Goshen, Ind., and Barbara Eichorn, Goshen, Jan. 1, by David Helmuth.

Bishop/Showalter: Genevieve Bishop, La Jara, Colo., and Richard Showalter, Chino Valley, Ariz., Jan. 18, by Leonard Redding.

Blosser/Moyer: Daniel Blosser, Harrisonburg, Va., and Deborah Moyer, Powhatan, Va., Jan. 3, by Mike Martin and Joseph Shenk.

Colvin/Esh: Christy Lee Greer Colvin, Corry, Pa., and Donald Ray Esh, Spartansburg, Pa., Feb. 14, by Carl Smeltzer.

Friesen/Reisenweaver: Sena Friesen, Winston-Salem, N.C., and Jon Reisenweaver, Burlington, Vt., Dec. 28, by Roddy O'Neil Cleary.

Gascho/Kurtz: Roy Gascho, Kitchener, Ont., and Martha Kurtz, Morgantown, Pa., Jan. 2, by Urbane Peachey.

Hartman/Shearer: Tonya Hartman, Portland, Ore., and Colby Shearer, Canby, Ore., Dec. 6, by Duane Tissell.

Keller/Transburg: Leah Keller, LaCrosse, Wis., and Peter Transburg, LaCrosse, Dec. 27, by Chris Crye.

Leaman/Masters: Deborah Leaman, Lancaster, Pa., and John Masters, Breinigsville, Pa., Nov. 29, by John Leaman.

Thomas/Wenger: Marlisa Thomas, Lancaster, Pa., and Sheldon Wenger, Strasburg, Pa., Feb. 21, by Sam Thomas.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
invites applications for the position of

West Coast MCC Executive Director

This position carries responsibility for administration, constituency and church relations, and program and resource development for MCC in the West Coast region.

Starting date: September 1, 1998
Location: Reedley, California
Applications will be accepted through May 1, 1998

Direct inquiries to: Bill Braun, Search Committee
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Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

Deaths

Beachy, Levi, 81, Arthur, Ill., died Feb. 18. Survivors: children David, Delilah England, Elsie Troyer, Anna Miller, Alma Fair, Theresa Binion; 24 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 21 at Arthur by Phil Schrock.

Beidler, Ethel Landis, 79, Quakertown, Pa., died Jan. 28 of heart disease. Survivors: children Edith Freed, Luke, Faith Benner, Hope Brubaker, Gloria Bontrager, Eva, Rose Yoder, Jewel Byler; 28 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 31 at Quakertown by Jonathan Schmidt.

Birky, Chauncey, 86, Kouts, Ind., died Feb. 17. Survivors: wife, Lelah; children Joyce Oury, Marston; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 21 at Kouts by Art Good and John Murray.

Blosser, Harvey, 101, Columbiana, Ohio, died Feb. 15. Survivors: wife, Wilma; children Virgil, Rosetta Martin; eight grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 18 at Columbiana by Larry Rohrer.

Brubaker, Miriam Erb, 80, Lititz, Pa., died Feb. 16. Survivors: husband, Joseph Brubaker; daughter, Martha. Burial: Feb. 20 at East Petersburg, Pa. by Karl Steffy, John Shenk and Donald Good.

Christophel, Ada M., 92, Shady Grove, Pa., died Feb. 19. Burial: Feb. 23 at Chambersburg, Pa., by Gayle Ruble and Nelson Martin.

Conrad, Esther, 79, Lansing, Mich., died Feb. 18. Burial: Feb. 21 at Ashley, Mich., by Joe Pendleton.

Crum, Carol, 60, Jackson, Ohio, died Feb. 26 of pneumonia. Burial: Feb. 27 at Jackson by Isabel Mullett.

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Denbrook, Ida, 95, Adams County, Ind., died Jan. 18. Survivors: children Myron, Richard, Joan; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: Glendale, Ariz.

Duinker, John, 73, Bentley, Alta., died Jan. 30. Survivors: wife, Gertie; children Katharine, Angela, Norman, Peter, Andrew, Bruce, David; 25 grandchildren.

Eichelberger, Louella Bechler, 93, Glendale, Ariz., died Feb. 20. Survivors: children Ruby Walstra, Glen, Dale, Louie Jr., Marvin; 25 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: Feb. 24 at Kouts, Ind., by John Murray and Chris Birky.

Erb, Saloma Christner, 93, Orrville, Ohio, died Feb. 18. Survivors: children Violet Northern, Marie MacKnight, Clyde; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; two stepgrandchildren; six stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: Kidron, Ohio, by Terry Shue and Herman Myers.

Frey, Melinda Frey, 84, Hawkesville, Ont., died Feb. 16. Survivors: children George, Judith Schaafsma, Emerson, Susannah Howden, Harvey, Selina Johnson, Naomi Smith, Anna Brubacher; 23 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 19 at Hawkesville by Don Penner.

Gimbel, Verda, 83, Cambridge, Ont., died Feb. 4. Burial: Feb. 7 at Breslau, Ont., by Laurence Martin.

Heatwole, Evelyn Shank, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 26. Survivors: husband, Roland; children David, Jerry, Marilyn McDaniel; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 30 at Harrisonburg by Joseph Shenk, Edith Shenk and Clarence Moyers.

Heiser, Raymond W., 85, Fisher, Ill., died Feb. 4. Survivors: wife, Hilda; children Sharilyn Liestman, Suzette Dhaemers, Arlys Carmien, Lowell, Lennie; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 7 at Fisher by Michael Dean and Cal Kaufman.

Hennigh, Edgar L., 73, Spartansburg, Pa., died Feb. 20. Survivors: wife, Bernetta; son Ronald; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 24 at Spartansburg by Carl Smeltzer.

Hirscher, Ruth E., 88, Moundridge, Kan., died Feb. 14. Survivor: daughter Connie Graber. Burial: Feb. 17 at Moundridge by Tim Kliewer.

Hofer, John E., 89, Freeman, S.D., died Feb. 13. Burial: Feb. 17 at Freeman by Ken Peterson.

Kauffman, Isaac Fred, 88, Lebanon, Ore., died Jan. 20 of cancer. Survivors: son John; stepson Tony Nofziger; 16 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 22 at Albany, Ore., by Lynn Miller.

Keller, Fannie F. Landis, 84, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 31. Survivors: children Arden, Gloria Moyer, Mary; nine grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 5 at Franconia, Pa., by John Ehst and Steven Landis.

Kulp, Amos Timothy, 94, Cheraw, Colo., died Feb. 14. Burial: Feb. 18 at Cheraw by Michael Yeakey.

Lambright, Irene Eash, 79, and **Lambright, John J.,** 84, of Middlebury, Ind., died from injuries suffered in a house fire. He died Jan. 8 and was buried Jan. 11. She died Jan. 17 and was buried Jan. 20. Survivors: children Theora Graber, Loren, Dorcas Carter; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Both burials at Middlebury by Linford Martin and Russ Stauffer.

Leaman, Ivan D., 91, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 19. Survivors: children Lois Garber, Marian Neff, Ivan, Alta Metzler, Esther Kniss, Ethel Sell, Mary Zuniga, James; 28 grandchildren; 57 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 22 at Lancaster by Abram Charles, Paul Charles and Greg Hershberger.

Litwiller, Estella M., 95, Hopedale, Ill., died Feb. 4. Burial: Feb. 9 at Hopedale by H. James Smith.

Martin, Sylvia Yoder, 91, Mylo, N.D., died Jan. 23. Survivors: children Roy, Gladene Bontrager, Larry, Dell, Kermit; 17 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 29 at Surrey, N.D. by Galen Kauffman and Ottis Yoder.

Miller, Edna E., 74, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 21. Survivors: children Richard, Robert; five grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 25 at Goshen by Firman Gingerich and Nancy Kauffman.

Mockler, Marlene Mishler, 62, Bristol, Ind., died Feb. 10 of cancer. Survivors: husband, Donald; children Stephen, Denise Schrock, Dennis, Victoria Troyer, Cynthia Snider, David; parents, Franklin and Florence Mishler. Burial: Feb. 13 at Middlebury, Ind., by Barry Schmell.

Pankratz, Esther, 94, Moundridge, Kan., died Jan. 13. Burial: Jan. 16 at Moundridge by Tim Kliewer.

Plett, Verdena Franz, 71, Buhler, Kan., died Feb. 13, of a stroke. Survivors: husband, Eldon; daughter Sharon Becker. Burial: Feb. 16 at Buhler by Bob Dalke.

Plummer, Lambert (Pete) R., 63, Stuarts Draft, Va., died Feb. 19. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Gloria Balser, Doris Barns, Nancy Hartsook, Dale, Mike; nine grandchildren; parents, Harry and Nellie Plummer. Burial: Feb. 22 at Stuarts Draft by Stanlee Kauffman and Jim Simmons.

Ritchie, Elizabeth, 92, Talcum, Ky., died Feb. 16. Survivors: children Luther, Verdin, Vincen, Billy, Larry, Philas Vanschoyck, Olive Estep, Mildred, Ida Winslow, Fern Smith; 30 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 18 at Talcum by Donald Blair.

Rupp, Omer H., 77, Moundridge, Kan., died Dec. 27 of a brain hemorrhage. Survivors: wife, Rachel; children Nancy Schwarzentraub, Beth Schey, James; six grandchildren. Burial: Dec. 31 at Moundridge by Tim Kliewer.

Sangrey, David M., 90, Manheim, Pa., died Feb. 17. Survivors: children Ruth Miller, Marian Groff, Mervin; seven grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; two stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 20 at East Petersburg, Pa., by Karl Steffy and Donald Good.

Schmidt, Carl G., 80, Beatrice, Neb., died Jan. 31, of cancer. Survivors: wife, Hilda; children Karen, Ruth Schmidt-Hewitt, Melvin; one grandchild. Burial: Feb. 4 at Beatrice by Ed Kauffman.

Schmucker, Ivan R., 78, Louisville, Ohio, died Feb. 2. Survivors: wife, Eunice; children Gene, June Brown; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Body given for medical research.

Schultz, Fannie Gerber Steckly, 89, Milverton, Ont., died Nov. 28. Survivors: children Clarence, Roy, Lorne, Harvey; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: Nov. 30 at Millbank, Ont., by Glenn Zehr.

Schultz, Ronald S., 61, Millbank, Ont., died Dec. 9, of cancer. Survivors: wife, Beatrice; daughters Yvonne, Wanda Poole; one grandchild. Burial: Dec. 11 by Glenn Zehr and Maurice Witzel.

Shank, Helen Elizabeth Rhodes, 72, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 22. Survivors: daughter Delores A. Lakes; one grandchild. Burial: Jan. 24 at Harrisonburg by Beryl Jantzi and Sam Janzen.

Shantz, Florence Beatrice Burkhart, 95, Kitchener, Ont., died Feb. 6. Survivors: children Robert, Dorothy, Harold, Alice Hornburg; 14 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: Feb. 9 at Breslau, Ont., by Laurence Martin.

Shantz, Mary Cressman, 82, Tavistock, Ont., died Jan. 25, of kidney failure. Survivors: husband, Mahlon; children Robert, Ruth Johnston, Murray, David, James, John, Ron; 21 grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 28 by Steve Drudge.

Showalter, Martha Ann Baer, 53, Broadway, Va., died Feb. 25. Survivors: husband, O. Franklin Jr.; children Elyzabeth Moore, O. Franklin III; parents, Lehman and Hilda Reynolds Baer. Burial: Feb. 28 at Broadway by Philip Kanagy and Richard Early.

Smeltzer, Laura, 93, Sarasota, Fla., died Feb. 17. Survivors: stepson Ray; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Elkhart, Ind., by Barry Loop.

Stauffer, Verbalee Euarda Stutzman, 85, Tofield, Alta., died Feb. 11. Survivors: husband, Boyd; children Joyce Amstutz, Bryan, Milo; nine grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 14 at Tofield by Dan Graber and Paul Voegtlin.

Steiner, Elmer B., 72, Orrville, Ohio, died Feb. 9. Survivors: children Robert, Judy Estrada, Phebe Westman, Laurel Martinez, Emily Riffle, Yvonne Butler, Angela Strock; foster son Francisco Mosquero; 18 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 13 at Kidron, Ohio, by Mike McFarren and John Lehman.

Stull, Minnie O., 93, Scottdale, Pa., died Jan. 15. Burial: Jan. 19 at Johnstown, Pa., by Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz.

Swegheimer, David Gene, 52, Hartville, Ohio, died Feb. 5. Survivors: parents, David and Delilah Swegheimer. Burial: Feb. 7 at Louisville, Ohio, by Ronald Blough.

Tomlonson, Judy Schroeder, 58, Warrensburg, Mo., died Dec. 3 of Lou Gehrig's disease. Survivors: children Jana Bond, Jill, Jeremy; mother, Bertha; four grandchildren. Body donated to science.

Voth, Wilmer "Bud," 77, Buhler, Kan., died Jan. 16 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Florence; children Connie Simms, Gloria Hudnall, Tom, Michael; nine grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 19 at Buhler by Bob Dalke.

Wengerd, Esther, 77, Hartville, Ohio, died Feb. 10. Survivors: children Edna Stutzman, Loyal, Ernie, Roy, Al, Robert; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 14 at Hartville, Ohio, by Dave Hall and Henry Shrock.

Wyse, Velma Raber, 87, Wayland, Iowa, died Feb. 5, of pneumonia. Survivors: children Charles, Sam; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 8 at Wayland by Ruben Chupp and Roger Farmer.

Yoder, Leona Byler, 84, Wellman, Iowa, died Feb. 28. Survivors: husband, George; children John, Carroll, Alan, Judy Moskalik; 11 grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 27 at Wellman by David Boshart.

Yoder, Raphael Purl, 96, Topeka, Ind., died Jan. 23, of pneumonia. Survivors: children Maurice, Gordon, Fred, Cheryl Miller; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Jan. 26 at Shipshewana, Ind., by John Murray.

Yost, Harlan L., 74, Leola, Pa., died Jan. 20, of a heart attack. Survivors: children Judy Derstine, Eva Kopacz, Kathy Hartje, Dale Yoder; seven grandchildren. Body donated to science.

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Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to William Hawk, VP and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email to dean@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

OrrVilla Retirement Community, Orrville, Ohio, seeks ***executive director***. Responsibilities include overall program, financial and staff management, maintaining relations with the church and local community and providing leadership and vision to a growing retirement community. Qualifications include organizational, communication, human resource and financial management skills.

Send confidential inquiries and/or resume to Morris Stutzman, president, 2171-B Eagle Pass, Wooster, OH 44691.

Akron Mennonite Church seeks half-time ***music minister***, beginning summer 1998. Responsibilities: guide music ministry-activity all ages, facilitate others, part of pastoral group. Qualifications: college music degree, experience, keyboard skills. Contact AMC, 1311 Diamond St., Akron, PA 17501; email AkronMenCh@aol.com.

Frederick Mennonite Community, Route 73, Montgomery County, Frederick, Pa., is looking to fill a newly created position of ***development officer***. This individual will be responsible for the fund-raising activities of the organization. College degree and fund-raising or development experience with one or more nonprofit agencies required. Please mail or fax resume to Yvonne Caputo, H.R. manager, Frederick Mennonite Community, P.O. Box 498, Frederick, PA 19435; fax 610-754-6475. EOE

Hopi Mission School (K-6) is seeking a ***school administrator*** to assume duties beginning July 1998. Requirements: education degree with administrative experience. School affiliations: Mennonite and American Baptist.

For more information contact Hopi Mission School, P.O. Box 39, Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039; 520-734-2453; fax 520-734-5126; email hopimission@psn.net.

Menno-Hof is accepting applications for ***volunteer host/hostess***. Enjoy meeting new people and sharing faith with visitors, awareness of Anabaptist history helpful. Position available in April. Contact Tim Lichti at P.O. Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565; 219-768-4117.

Mennonite Board of Missions seeks applicants for the following full-time positions:

Staff associate in evangelism and church development to consult with conferences and congregations for church planting and ministry development. Qualifications include: experience as effective urban church leader; proven team leader and participant; ability to listen, strategize, encourage and empower others; good public communication skills, and physical ability to travel independently. Dynamic faith, passion for mission, commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist belief and practice, and understanding of Mennonite Church structures and integration issues are crucial.

Administrative assistants to assist in organizing departmental procedures and manage projects with multiple levels of detail. Qualifications include: proven experience with word processing, spread sheet and data base software, initiative, flexibility and accuracy.

Computer network administrator/technician to monitor the network function and provide hardware trouble-shooting and maintenance, and implement and support electronic mail and online services. Qualifications include technical training and experience in a network environment, communication and organizational skills, attention to detail, flexibility, physical strength to lift and move up to 70 pounds.

Computer software specialist and trainer to provide software training and support to users and assist with network functions. Qualifications include: ability to research applications to enhance capability of user software, assist in data base management, and provide back-up when needed for other computer staff, technical training and experience in a network environment, communication and organizational skills, ability to train staff in software applications, flexibility and attention to detail.

Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Interested people should be committed Christians, committed to positive team relationships, and part of a local congregation. Please contact Rachel L. Stoltzfus, 219-294-7523; email rachells@mbm.org, or write to Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46516.

Fresno Pacific University is seeking qualified ***faculty member*** to teach a variety of social work courses and to provide leadership for the undergraduate social work program. This position is 2/3-time and begins Aug. 15. Doctorate (or nearly completed degree) in the field desired. Fresno Pacific University is a dynamic Christian liberal arts college of the Mennonite Brethren Church. All candidates for faculty positions must share the college's Christian commitment. For full description and application form, write or phone Dr. Howard J. Loewen, provost, Fresno Pacific University, 1717 S. Chestnut, Fresno, CA 93702; 209-453-2023. Women and members of minority groups are especially encouraged to apply. Applications will be evaluated beginning March 30 and appointment will be made as soon thereafter as a suitable candidate is secured.

Hesston College seeks applicants for the position of ***director of campus facilities***. The facilities director leads and manages the maintenance and development of the campus physical plant. Responsibilities include administration of the maintenance department, supervision of personnel, budget management and coordination of projects in the campus master plan. Qualifications include experience in facilities management and a minimum of two years college education. Full-time/12-month position begins July 1.

To apply, send cover letter, resume and three references to Nelson Kilmer, director of finance, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; 316-327-8217; fax 316-327-8300; email nelsonk@hesston.edu.

Bluffton College announces a full-time, tenure track position in ***communication and theater*** beginning September 1998. Rank dependent on qualifications; doctorate in theater, communication or related field required; some college/university teaching experience preferred. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate courses in speech communication and theater (acting, production, directing, oral interpretation); directing two college theater productions each year; and the possibility of developing a modest forensics program. Consideration of applications begins March 16 and continues until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.

Send letter of interest, resume or vita, three letters of reference and official transcripts to Amy Tabler, assistant to the VP and dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Bluffton College welcomes applications from all academically qualified faculty who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. EOE

Classified ad space is available in *The Mennonite* at $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified, call 1-800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

A film unlike any other

by Gordon Houser

Only when you see a film like *The Apostle* (rated PG-13) do you realize how rare it is. Oscar-winner Robert Duvall—the film's writer, director, producer and star—tried in vain for 13 years to get a Hollywood studio to finance his project. It only came to the screen after Duvall put up $5 million of his own money.

What makes it so different? Why was Hollywood so reluctant to finance it? My guess is because it is a realistic portrayal of a segment of Christianity. It does not present a stereotypical Bible-thumping, fraudulent preacher. Nor does it present a generalized, feel-good religion a la *Touched by an Angel*.

Instead *The Apostle* tells a powerful story of a Pentecostal Holiness evangelist who though flawed—he becomes violent, gets drunk and has affairs with women—nevertheless exhibits a genuine faith. Both narrow-minded secularists and believers will have trouble with the film. But no one can doubt the honesty of the story or the remarkable performance of Duvall (who received an Oscar nomination).

Rev. Eulis "Sonny" Dewey (Duvall) is the minister of a thriving interracial Pentecostal congregation in Fort Worth, Texas. When he discovers his wife (Farrah Fawcett) having an affair with the youth minister, she asks for a divorce. Soon he loses his wife, his children and his congregation and flees after assaulting the youth minister. He anoints himself an apostle and in a small Louisiana town begins another church. As he preaches redemption and introduces others to the saving grace of Jesus Christ, he finds his own redemption.

The Apostle is a film unlike any I've seen. It reveals how alike many Hollywood films are and how rarely they show genuine Christian faith on the screen.

A culture clothed with violence

by Ted Lewis

"Their bodies are sleek and strong, . . . they clothe themselves with violence."—Psalm 73:4,6

Last December at a Wal-Mart entrance, I watched several violent fights that all resulted in one opponent killing the other. I was stunned. I also watched a steady stream of shoppers coming and going, taking no notice of the violence at hand.

Adjacent to me was "Soul Edge," an interactive video game that follows the legacy of "Mortal Combat." Before quarters are slotted, the screen displays appetizers of swords clashing and sophisticated martial arts fighting. In plain view of any 5-year-old walking by, these preview battles are to the death.

From bus stations to pizza parlors, I've seen video violence. But in Wal-Mart the acceptance of violence in our culture struck me anew. I wondered what graphic horrors would be commonplace 10 years hence. At what point do I protest fictional violence in public?

Even with my nonviolent leanings, I have tolerated dramatized violence for years. From TV alone the average 18-year-old has seen 18,000 murders and 110,000 hostile acts. Repetition desensitizes us, creates acceptance.

The writer of Psalm 73 wrestled with a society where violence and materialism were not only dominant but admired. The psalmist admits to being tugged by the undertow of a corrupt culture. But the writer acknowledges God as the supreme magnet of his heart.

By saying yes to God we also can disentangle ourselves from a media culture that bids us "drink up waters in abundance" (Psalm 73:10) without discernment.

Ted Lewis attends Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan.

From our readers: Gayle Wiens of Goessel, Kan., recommends the novel *Stones from the River* by Ursula Hegi (Scribner, 1997). It is about a woman (who happens to have dwarfism) growing up in Germany in the period before, during and after World War II, and how her town coped with Nazi ideology. The book, Gayle says, helps us consider how we would have responded if we had lived in that village at that time in history.

Academy Awards: This annual gala is on TV March 23. *Titanic* will likely garner the most awards, including best picture, though my favorite is *The Full Monty*. Each best-picture nominee raises moral questions. If you see them, ask yourself what these are.—*Gordon Houser*

Pontius' Puddle

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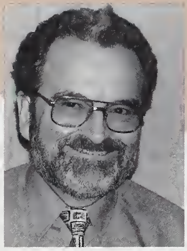

by J. Lorne Peachey

Save us from wherever it is we're headed

Sunday mornings I usually get up early, turn on National Public Radio, sit with my coffee and forget stress and clutter as I listen to the choirs and classical musicians of *Saint Paul Sunday*. It's my favorite, lazy time of the week.

But host Bill McGlaughlin jostled me awake Feb. 22 when he introduced The McNeil Jubilee Singers from Los Angeles for Black History Month. Noting world events for that day, he quoted these lyrics the choir was about to sing: "Turn the world around, and save us from wherever it is we're headed."

Apt words for Sunday, Feb. 22. Our world appeared to be on the brink of another war as Saddam Hussein continued to defy the United Nations, and the United States continued to see itself as chief enforcer of the United Nations' embargo. On that Sunday morning, few of us could predict where our world was going.

The need to be saved from wherever the world is headed seems especially acute these days. From Serbia, Peru, Mexico, Congo and the cities of North America come reports of tribal wars, disease, poverty, insurrection, oppression, hatred, envy—the list of what we humans can do to each other is endless. As noted on pages 12-13, members of Christian Peacemaker Teams have firsthand knowledge of the disastrous effects of all these in the Middle East.

One would hope for better things in the church. But here, too, we continue to fight: about biblical interpretation, about military personnel and church membership, about homosexuality—and about what to do with those who decide differently from us.

Throw into this mix integration and the insecurities that come with merging two similar but still distinct denominations, and it's no wonder people ask where the Mennonite church could be headed. We too may do well to pray, "Save us from wherever it is we're going."

A first step in this prayer is to acknowledge that we cannot save ourselves, that our dependence is on our Creator God. It is to admit our poverty of spirit, that we in ourselves do not have it all together. We cannot do it on our own. We need God.

What more appropriate reflection for Lent: "We need God." If we would be saved from where we're headed, if we would continue to be turned toward love, peace, assurance and understanding, it will take much more than the effort of our hands. Only with God will we truly be saved from ourselves.—*jlp*

The world turned around

Whether or not the lyrics of The McNeil Jubilee Singers had anything to do with it, somehow the world got turned around on Sunday, Feb. 22. By the end of the day U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan had negotiated a truce with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. A fragile deal, to be sure, but one that still holds as I write.

We Mennonites can be quick to speak up against force. When another way is chosen, may we be as quick to affirm the hard decisions and the unpopular choices.

Was it only political astuteness that kept us from war? Is it possible the prayers offered in my congregation that Sunday morning—and in hundreds of other Mennonite churches around the world—might have had something to do with it? When it appeared war was coming toward the end of February, Mennonites were active with letter-writing campaigns, with emails and phone calls to our government representatives. In fact, *The Mennonite* had a story almost ready about some of these activities, a story we decided not to print when they were successful.

Now that our prayers have been answered, we thank God the world has turned, if even for a brief moment. And we need to continue to pray, write letters, send emails and make phone calls to government officials, this time to thank them for choosing the way of peace.

We Mennonites can be quick to speak up for another way when it appears force will be used. When that other way is chosen, may we be as quick to affirm the hard decisions and the unpopular choices leaders have to make.

"Turn the world around," sang The McNeil Jubilee Singers Feb. 22. It happened—much sooner that most of us would have predicted. It can happen again, if we continue to believe it possible, and if we make heard our voices of thanks and joy when it does.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

March 24, 1998

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killed with kindness in Haiti

4 Kansas church to lose membership
5 Out of apartheid into Anabaptism
10 Gathering more often for Communion
16 Threatening to take each other to court

T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Remembering John Howard Yoder

Just when I was about to chide you for the relative silence on the passing of John Howard Yoder, you come along and out-do yourself (*The Mennonite*, March 3). You used two articles by two converts to John's thinking and by—I would guess—a General Conference Mennonite and a member of the Mennonite Church. What a stroke of genius with the long-awaited integration now seemingly on course and eagerly anticipated by many of us. I finished the last page and had another positive feeling for integration from the two testistimonies and a sense that a providential God might be especially well pleased with issue three.—*Denton Croyle, Wadsworth, Ohio*

The article and editorial about John Howard Yoder stirred some memories in me. As Ted Grimsrud reports, John was a man of "large presence." I once interviewed him, and after the interview, I had the distinct impression that he was in charge of the interview, not me.

John and I both participated in a "Witness Workshop" in Chicago. We were sent out into the city to engage people in conversation in order to practice sharing the gospel. John reported that when he attempted to engage folks in conversation, they would not respond. But as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12, there are many gifts of the one Spirit. John had a gift for writing.—*Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

If Harold S. Bender taught us Mennonites to appreciate our Anabaptist heritage, it was John Howard Yoder who taught the rest of the Christian world to value the peace witness we had kept alive for four and a half centuries. I find *Jesus y la Realidad Politica* (the Spanish version of *The Politics of Jesus*) quoted or referred to in all kinds of Christian circles in Spain.

On a more personal note, as a student my experience of John Howard was somewhat warmer than Ted Grimsrud's. I remember being in his home often, where his shyness tended to disappear next to his wife Annie's warmth. I particularly remember him rolling around on the carpet, playing with his delighted 3-year-old son. Over the last 27 years, I hardly ever saw him. But to me, his death is the loss of a teacher whom I also considered a friend. —*Dennis Byler, Burgos, Spain*

Thank you to Ted Grimsrud for his article "A Faithful Teacher in the Church." At first I thought, "Oh no, not another praise article about John Howard Yoder." The balance Grimsrud gives is needed. If we praise only the good and neglect to include the negative, we are in denial. We need to face the truth. Hopefully, in facing the truth, we can all grow, learn and change inappropriate behavior.—*Maureen Friesen, Freeman, S.D.*

Homosexuality and sin

While important, the debates of "Is homosexuality sin?" get the church stuck at the wrong question. We're losing a healthy perspective on the justice of our response.

Consider the biblical evidence dealing with the proper mission of God's people in regard to society's "unclean." Taking the evidence seriously, we cannot stop at the levitical holiness code passages and a few oft-cited Pauline "proof texts." The whole Bible includes Jesus' social teachings and actions, Peter's epiphany in Acts 10-11, Paul's admonitions in Romans 14 and much more.

The biblical evidence gives me serious reasonable doubt that sufficient cause has been established in this case to make anyone into an outcast. So while the debates about sin drag on, let's grant the same-sex "sinners" and their families and friends the same welcome as is granted to all the rest of us sinners. What would Jesus do for today's outcasts: have fellowship meals or sew scarlet Hs?—*Bradley Lehman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Something my mother told me as a child has been working on me for several months now. She said, "Where no wood is added, the fire goes out." Someone else said, "To win an argument, one must let the other quit with dignity."

To continue writing about homosexuality only causes things to get worse. We cannot change the Scriptures; no one has the authority to forgive sin but God. Let's let it lay now and let the Holy Spirit work.—*Frank J. Willems, Canton, Kan.*

Representation and inclusion

I am concerned about the proposal on the composition of the general board of the new Mennonite Church (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 17). A strong effective board represents the grassroots who have elected their representatives to the board. The conferences and organizations have selected these representatives to bring their needs and concerns to the board. Race, gender and historical background are important considerations in the selection of board members but not the only ones.

A general board selected only on the basis of gender, race and historical background may look great on paper. It will not be strong or

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Incorporating *Gospel Herald* (1908-1998) and *The Mennonite* (1885-1998)

The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453.

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say readers say

effective because it has as its task the passing down of its collective wisdom and will to the conferences and organizations the board is attempting to govern.—*Glenn Zimmerly, Lusbnje, Albania*

I want to respond to a letter that expressed concern about the Integration Committee's proposal to form the U.S. general board by "gender, race and historical General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church background" as opposed to representation by area conference and church organization (*The Mennonite*, March 3). The writer questioned whether this principle fit biblical or Mennonite ecclesiology and theology. One might also question whether representation based upon area conferences and organizations is necessarily more biblical or better fits Mennonite ecclesiology and theology.

Christ including at his table the forgotten, forsaken, neglected, under-represented, voiceless people is at the heart of the gospel story. The persistence of systematic racism and sexism within the church and society is a sinful reality that we must address and redress. Surely Mennonite theology and ecclesiology don't condone the exclusion and inequitable representation of women and people of color from the highest places of ecclesiastical power. We should keep first and foremost in our policies and processes those often considered last.—*Leo Hartshorn, Lancaster, Pa.*

Another first issue reaction

Congratulations on your inaugural issue of *The Mennonite*. I've enjoyed reading *Gospel Herald* for years and have come to expect interesting material which is informative, inspirational and thought provoking. Keep it up.—*Earl F. Burkholder, Circleville, Pa.*

Kansas congregation becomes third to lose church membership over homosexuality

Barring an unforeseen change in its position, a Kansas City, Kan., congregation will become the third to be removed from the Mennonite Church (MC) over homosexuality and church membership.

Basing its decision on a vote by conference delegates, the South Central Conference executive committee has rescinded the membership of Rainbow Mennonite Church, effective March 1, 1999. Fifty-two percent of delegates voted in a recent mail-in ballot to "loose [Rainbow] from their membership in the conference."

The committee's decision, made at a March 6-7 meeting, was not unanimous, moderator Howard Keim says.

Rainbow accepts members without regard to sexual orientation. The MC Purdue 87 statement on human sexuality calls homosexual activity a sin but urges continued dialogue on the issue.

Rainbow, also a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church, will remain in South Central Conference until next March but without voting privileges. The committee added the year "in the hope that some mutual solution could be found by that time ... if there is some movement on Rainbow's part," Keim says.

Any such movement is unlikely, Rainbow pastor Frank Ward says. Two options were for Rainbow to again study the issue and to withdraw from the Supportive Congregations Network (SCN), an organization of Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations which accept as members homosexuals in noncelibate, monogamous relationships.

"There did not seem to me any real support for either one of these options," Ward says. The congregation spent 20 years studying the issue, he says, and decided a year and a half ago to continue its SCN membership.

Seventy-four of 141 South Central delegates voted to terminate Rainbow's membership. Another 19 supported a two-year probation without voting privileges. Thirty-nine delegates —or 27 percent—wrote in that no disciplinary action be taken against Rainbow. The no-action option was not included on the ballot.

"We had been hoping for limited-member status," Ward says. "However, I don't think I was really surprised."

The vote and decision came after a year and a half of dialogue between the conference and congregation. In a March 11 letter to South Central delegates, Keim wrote that the executive committee was "reluctant to take an action which would result in loss of communication with Rainbow."

Ames (Iowa) Mennonite Church was the first MC congregation to lose its membership because of its position on homosexuality and church membership. The congregation was expelled from Iowa-Nebraska Conference in 1987. Franconia Conference last year terminated the membership of Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia.—*Rich Preheim*

Overseas churches receive first MWC checks

STRAUSBORG, France—In an experiment in biblical justice, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) has sent the first checks from the Global Church Sharing Fund to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches overseas.

MWC established the fund to celebrate that a majority of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Christians now live in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As much as $5,000 is now being sent without strings attached to MWC member churches on those three continents. Larger churches are eligible to receive an additional amount following the next MWC General Council meeting, to be held in 2000 in Colombia.

National churches receiving the money will decide how the funds can best be used. The money has been made available simply "to advance the work of the church," says MWC executive secretary Larry Miller.

He calls the fund an experiment in redistributing decision making, power and money.

The idea for the fund grew out of discussions of the Bible's models for sharing, economic justice and equality. The fund was adopted by the MWC General Council in January 1997.

The fund had reached $1 million by the time the first phase of distribution began. Mennonite Central Committee gave $600,000 toward the fund, and Mennonite Mutual Aid contributed another $300,000. The amount raised so far comes to less than $1 per baptized Anabaptist worldwide, Miller says.

MWC member churches must meet minimal guidelines to qualify for the money, including being in good standing with partner churches and agencies and not undergoing internal disputes or conflicts. About 10 national churches do not yet meet the requirements.

At least 60 percent of the fund will be allocated to churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Two hundred thousand dollars has been put in an endowment fund until 2000, and as much as $55,000 may be used for administration of the fund. At least $95,000 will be used for the Gifts Sharing project, which will seek to share human resources among all MWC member churches, including those in Europe and North America.—*Marshall V. King of MWC News Service*

Out of apartheid into Anabaptism

EMM administrator offers new perspectives

SALUNGA, Pa.—Growing up as a colored person in South Africa, Graham Cyster believed that communism and violence were his only hopes for overcoming apartheid.

But his journey out of South Africa and in pursuit of justice led him to Anabaptist views of nonviolence. Cyster last month joined Eastern Mennonite Missions as an associate director in Home Ministries.

Two years after the student uprising in Soweto, Cyster left South Africa in 1978, ostensibly for good. He ended up in England, where he began work on a master's degree in theology.

In London, he met Mennonites for the first time: Mennonite Board of Missions workers Alan and Eleanor Kreider, directors of the London Mennonite Centre. At the center, God began to heal the deep ravages of Cyster's soul that had accrued from apartheid.

As he learned to know the Kreiders, Cyster quickly discovered that their Anabaptist theology of nonviolence irritated him. One day he blurted out: "You guys are playing games. It's easy for you to talk about nonviolence. You march and the police are protecting you. Go to South Africa and try to sell it there."

For weeks, Cyster and the Kreiders engaged in vigorous discussions. They recommended books for him to read. Meanwhile, African National Congress people in London kept prodding Cyster to join with them.

In the midst of Cyster's inner struggle, God finally spoke to him. "It was almost like he said, 'Now is the time for you to make up your mind how you want to see the world's problems solved,'" Cyster says.

Soon after that, while reading in the center's library, he picked up John Howard Yoder's book *What Would You Do?* Suddenly Cyster's world of violence and anger began to fall apart.

"I thought I had the right to respond in violence and vengence if somebody came against me," Cyster says.

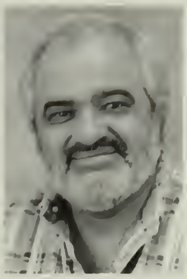
He made a decision that violence would never, ever be an option for him, no matter what happened.

Cyster's thirst for learning about Mennonites increased. "I began to realize that there was a rich heritage that I wanted to be part of, not in the cultural or ethnic sense, but in the theological sense," he says.

After seven and a half years in England, Cyster traveled to the United States, where he met his wife, Dorcas, a white Mennonite. They went to South Africa, where they were the first biracial married couple in Capetown, and served as church planters and overseers.

In 1986, the Cysters founded Broken Wall Community in Capetown, a ministry encouraging racial reconciliation and healing among white, black and colored South Africans. The Cysters served as directors until last year, when they returned to the United States.

Says Cyster: "I believe that God has deposited in us who have said yes to the Anabaptist theology a Great Commission to bring the church and the world back again to the fundamentals and the radicalness of the cross of Jesus Christ."—*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*



I thought I had the right to respond in violence and vengeance if somebody came against me.

—*Graham Cyster*

MCCer offers education in and out of the classroom

KHARTOUM, Sudan—One by one, the students at Omdurman Ahlia University completed their English language exams. It wasn't until he sat down to grade all 900 of them that Rick Binder realized the task was even more daunting than he thought: The students had written their names in Arabic, rather than English, making it impossible for him to match the names in his grade book.

Such are some of the challenges of teaching in Africa's largest country.

Binder, a Mennonite Central Committee worker, has lived in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, since 1996 with his wife and two sons. The Binders are from Abbotsford, B.C.

"I'd guess that 95 percent of my students have never before had a foreign teacher, so I feel religiously, culturally and socially on display," Binder says. "I have a unique opportunity to share cross-culturally."

The West accuses Sudan's Islamic government of harboring and supporting terrorists. Many aid agencies have withdrawn from the country, and few foreigners remain. At the same time, Sudan's long-running civil war continues to drain the country's resources.

But teaching provides an ideal setting for developing relationships with the Sudanese, and Binder has had opportunities to break stereotypes of North Americans. Sudanese are deeply religious people, Binder says, and are often surprised to discover that he is also interested in spiritual matters.—*Pearl Sensenig of MCC News Service*

Mennonite Central Committee worker Rick Binder (left) confers with his department chair at Omdurman Ahlia University. On the wall behind them are pictures of students killed in Sudan's ongoing civil war.

MCC photo by Tony Siemens

Sharing, evangelizing, changing

Conference particpants challenged to expand work

WILLIAMSBURG, Va.—In a community filled with crime, unemployment and broken families, the church is called to model Christ's compassion and discipleship. In a world filled with poverty, environmental degradation and lost souls, the church is called to model Christ's Good News.

And there is much more to do, requiring changes in belief and action, Ron Sider, author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger,* told representatives from more than 20 U.S. and Canadian Mennonite mutual aid organizations.

"If the gospel was just the forgiveness of sins, we could just go on and not do anything different," said Sider, the featured speaker at the Association of Mennonite Aid Societies (AMAS) annual conference March 11-13.

Some 140 people at the conference heard Sider, founder of Evangelicals for Social Action and an ordained Mennonite minister, highlight the discrepancies between the haves and have-nots, the roots of the problem and the responsibilities of the church.

"One part of what it means to be the church means to be sharing economically," he said.

Explaining that God has a special concern for the poor, Sider said Christians need to respond with both social action and an invitation to salvation. "It's when all of that comes together that we can really change people," he said.

Unfortunately, Sider noted, evangelism usually neglects social concerns, and social programs—even those that are Christian—minimize or ignore the salvation message.

In his final presentation, Sider pushed the Mennonite mutual aid organizations on their work. He asked:

- How does Mennonite insurance differ from secular insurance?
- Is the church uncritically accepting secular norms for retirement financial planning?
- Has the church looked too much to Mennonite aid organizations for ways of economic sharing?

In a conference workshop, Steven Brown shared how his congregation, Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., responds to needs in their locale. Calvary, a member of Virginia Conference, serves a predominantly African-American community filled with teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, unemployment, welfare dependence and other social ills.

"This is our mission field," said Brown, a member of Calvary's pastoral team.

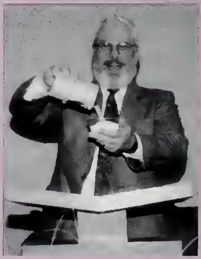
Among the congregation's efforts are a GED program, child daycare, parenting and lifeskills classes, mentoring programs, a school, a food pantry and radio and TV ministries. Sermon topics have included paying bills on time, setting goals and how to apply for a job.

"We have not been called to give handouts, but we give a hand," Brown said. "Our brother should not keep depending on us to always give."

Calvary's ministries have not only changed lives, they have changed the congregation. In 1990, Calvary had 50 members. Now, Brown said, membership is about 1,100.

Spurred on by the conference's presentations, outgoing AMAS board member E. Fred Goering of Moundridge, Kan., suggeted that at each annual conference, AMAS make a financial contribution to a local charity. The idea will be discussed by the executive committee.—*Rich Preheim for Meetinghouse*

Salt of the earth


GCMC photo by Lois Barrett

Dick Davis, the pastor of Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas, pours salt into a box during his sermon at the City on a Hill kickoff worship service Feb. 8, held at Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Dallas. "We need to let our differentness as Mennonites give spice and flavor to the city of Dallas," Davis said.

Dallas was selected as the Commission on Home Ministries' City on a Hill for 1998. CHM each year awards a $25,000 grant to a Canadian or U.S. urban area for ministry initiatives.

The service included sermons in English and Spanish and concluded with Communion.

Dallas is home to four Mennonite congregations. Also present at the service were representatives from Hope Mennonite Church in Fort Worth and a Hispanic church plant south of Dallas.

Cleo Yoder made her first visit to Virginia with her husband, Melvin, for the annual conference of the Association of Mennonite Aid Societies March 11-13. But AMAS was not her primary reason for the trip.

Until March 14, Yoder, from Hesston, Kan., and Lillian Miller, from Newport News, Va., had met just once, even though they have been pen pals for some 60 years. The two women met through *Words of Cheer,* the predecessor to the Mennonite children's periodical *On the Line.*

"I guess we just clicked," Yoder says. "It seemed we had a lot in common."

Their only other face-to-face meeting was in 1954 when Miller visited Yoder in Kansas. Their second meeting, following the AMAS conference, was a birthday party; Yoder was born on March 14 and Miller on March 21.—*Rich Preheim*

Correction: Ann Allebach in 1905 became the first General Conference Mennonite Church woman to be ordained. Marilyn Miller was mistakenly identified as the first in the March 10 issue of *The Mennonite.*

MBM reports gains in giving, projects

ELKHART, Ind.—For Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), the numbers were up in 1997, both financially and personally.

Financial contributions from individuals and congregations increased by 5 percent, or $217,000, over the previous fiscal year. But MBM saw other successes, as well.

Participation in MBM's short-term mission programs soared to record levels, a trend particularly evident through Service Adventure, in which 18- to 20-year-olds live in a common household and serve as community volunteers. Participation in the program doubled in 1997 as new units opened in Anchorage, Alaska; Raleigh, N.C.; and South Bend, Ind. Participation in SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older People) also increased in the last year.

Participation in Mennonite Voluntary Service increased nearly 12 percent as new units opened in 1997 in Austin, Texas, and Topeka, Kan.

In the largest service effort ever for a Mennonite Church convention, nearly 3,500 Mennonite youth and young adults performed more than 12,000 hours of community service at Orlando 97. The service projects were managed by MBM's short-term missions staff.

The number of congregations that have developed supportive relationships with specific MBM workers or ministries jumped nearly 30 percent. By the end of MBM's fiscal year on Jan. 31, 215 support plans increased giving by nearly $90,000 over the previous year.

But 1997 also was a year in which long-term ministries began to show results. Seeds planted as early as the 1970s burst forth into tremendous bloom in West Africa and the United Kingdom.

Last September in Benin, 135 people made up the first graduating class from a three-year cycle of systematic training in Bible, church history and theology led by MBM worker Rodney Hollinger-Janzen. They celebrated their accomplishment in a new pavilion, built with support from two North American work teams. Enrollment for the next three-year term had to be stopped when it surpassed 200.

In London, more than 50 representatives from 23 congregations from England, Northern Ireland and Scotland met Jan. 31 at the London Mennonite Centre to give birth to a congregational network of "conversation partners" about their common Anabaptist vision,

After years of internal conflict since 1980, reconciliation came to the Mennonite Church of Nigeria through an MBM-negotiated agreement that brought Bishop I.U. Nsasak to study at Hesston (Kan.) College for a year.

After a year of studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., funded by MBM and Mennonite Central Committee, Samuel Doe returned to his home country of Liberia to lead efforts to bring reconciliation in a nation that has just ended an eight-year civil war.

Meanwhile, an Anabaptist coalition, including MBM, in Mexico City made significant progress toward its goal of starting 10 new congregations by 2001. By the end of 1997, seven church sites were under development with two of them having nearly 200 members each.—*Tom Price of MBM News Service*

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Killed with kindness

The negative side of aid to Haiti

by John Longhurst

It is estimated that over 1,000 aid groups (although some observers say the number is higher) operate in Haiti, a country of 7.5 million people. That figure doesn't include countless numbers of small groups made up of church members and others that come down to Haiti for a week or so to build churches, clinics and schools and dispense money, medicine and other assistance.

A leader of a Latin American country beset by myriad problems once lamented that his nation was "so far from God and so close to the United States."

He could have been talking about Haiti. The Caribbean island nation—the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere—is only an hour-and-a-half plane ride from Miami. This proximity means that it is within easy reach of North Americans moved by the plight of its many poor. It's been joked that if it weren't for all the aid groups flying down to Haiti for week-long stints, American Airlines would lose money on the route.

It's not that Haiti doesn't need help. Years of oppressive governments, corruption, deforestation and, more recently, a devastating economic embargo have left the majority of the population with little work or hope. Aid is definitely needed. The problem is that Haitians are in danger of being killed by kindness.

"The history of development aid in Haiti is money given poorly," says Ron Braun, who directs international programs for Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). "The problem is not simply lack of aid but how it is used."

According to Ron, who lived and worked in Haiti from 1983 to 1986, a critical problem is that too much of the aid that comes to Haiti is given away, with the result that it undermines local industries and promotes a hand-out mentality. "Why should someone invest time, energy and money to produce things that aid groups will give away free?" he asks.

By way of example, Ron points to the proliferation of free used clothing that is sent to Haiti by well-meaning aid groups. Haitians call them "Kennedy clothes," because it was during the John F. Kennedy administration that the free used clothing began to arrive. It is common to see Haitians wearing shirts bearing the names of U.S. and Canadian cities, sports teams and colleges. Since Haitian tailors can't compete with free clothes, they go out of business—and maybe end up needing free clothes, too.

Partnership and responsibility: Haitians at work near St. Marc, Haiti, on a road improvement project managed by Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

"It's easy to understand why North Americans are moved by the plight of Haiti's poor," Ron says. "But genuine concern and good intentions don't make up for aid that hurts more than it helps."

The problem, say Haitians and North Americans working for long-established aid groups, is that there is no control over who gets to set up aid programs, nor any official efforts to coordinate the efforts of the many groups.

Wild West of the development world: "Haiti is the Wild West of the development world," says Dan Wiens who, with his wife, Wilma, directs Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programs in Haiti. "And just like on the frontier, there are lots of Lone Rangers who do their own thing, never taking any advice from groups that have been here a long time."

The result, says Dan, is that the same mistakes are made over and over by new groups. What's worse, their efforts often undermine the work of organizations committed to long-term programs that emphasize local initiative and investment—programs that lend, not give, money, or that pay people for various kinds of work.

"You can be on one side of the mountain, operating a program that emphasizes the participation of local people, doing things that require them to take some responsibility and ownership. Meanwhile, on the other side, a group comes by and gives away food or aid.

"What do you think people will do if there's free aid a few kilometers away?" Dan asks. "Human nature is the same all over the world."

He says some groups come to Haiti from North America and literally "throw stuff off the back of a truck." He recalls what happened in one town where MCC workers lived and worked: "After the truck went through, people came to our workers and asked why they had to work to receive aid from MCC—why didn't they give it away? After all, the other group did."

The result is a nation of beggars, says Guy Labbe, a Haitian who manages a local factory that tries to assist people through job creation.

"All this charity has made Haitians think they have an incurable disease called poverty," he says. "They think they can't help themselves—they have to be helped because they are poor."

'Go home': As might be expected, some Haitians are angry over how some groups deliver aid in their country. One North American aid worker recalls visiting a Haitian community leader and asking how his agency could best help in Haiti. "Go home," the North America was told.

Jean-Claude Cerin, a Haitian who directs MEDA's programs in Haiti, won't go that far. "I won't say groups should leave, but they all should recognize that there is a negative side of aid in Haiti," he says.

Jean-Claude says that one of the main problems with aid in Haiti is duplication and lack of coordination.

"There's lots of waste," he says. "In some areas several groups are doing exactly the same thing. Sometimes they even end up competing with one another to get people to help."

As well, he says, many well-intentioned groups that come to the country don't have any know-how about local customs and culture or what's been done before that didn't work. What's worse, some groups don't seem to want to learn about Haitians or their way of life.

"They come here to give us a better life," says Jean-Claude. "It's patronizing and paternalistic. It tells Haitians they aren't capable of getting a better life for themselves."

He believes there are times when aid can be given away, such as when there is a natural disaster or when vulnerable people such as the elderly or children aren't getting enough food.

"But even in these cases efforts must be made to buy food locally, to support local businesses," Jean-Claude says.

Best way to help: The best way to help, says Ron, is by investing in local businesses, institutions and people. "We have to treat them the way we want to be treated—with a respect that acknowledges they can take responsibility for their own lives. By constantly giving away aid, we undermine our own commitment to the sustainability of our efforts and send the message we think they are like children, always dependent on our help."

For Ron Braun and MEDA, this means having business relationships with Haitian organizations that emphasize partnership and responsibility.

"They can expect something from us, and we expect something from them in return," says Ron of programs that lend money for small business development. "It changes the way we relate to each other. It's not top-down. And it's not simply bottom-up, either. It's a lateral relationship, a businesslike partnership in which both parties have high expectations of the other."

Genuine concern and good intentions don't make up for aid that hurts more than it helps.—*Ron Braun*

Adds Jean-Claude: "We have to change the relationship between Haitians and North Americans. It can't just be charity all the time."

Will it change? Among the passengers on the flight back to Miami was a church group from British Columbia that had come to Haiti for a week to put roofs on churches. They also brought a lot of aid to leave behind. "We raised $14,000 for Haiti," said a group member as he waited for luggage at the Miami airport. "We're going home without a dime left."

John Longhurst is a writer in Winnipeg for Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

Respect local customs and culture: Haitian children near Grand Riviere du Nord, Haiti

Photo by John Longhurst

RNS photo

Come to the Lord's Table

Mennonites are gathering more often for Communion.

by Marlene Kropf

Except for a few dry branches arranged in a plain clay pot, the church is bare during Lent. Week by week the congregation journeys through the wilderness and becomes aware of its profound hunger and thirst for God. When at last people come to the Lord's Table, they sing softly, "I hunger and I thirst" (*Hymnal: A Worship Book* 474) and are served unleavened bread.

On Maundy Thursday the entire congregation—adults, youth, children—gathers around tables in the church fellowship hall. After a meal of vegetable soup, hearty whole wheat bread and an assortment of cheeses and fruit, everyone participates in breaking the loaves of bread and sharing the cup in memory of Jesus' death. Though the service is simple and solemn, it is rich in remembrance.

Three days later, on Easter Sunday, the Communion table is spread with white and gold cloths on which are arranged festive Easter breads and crystal goblets. As trumpets soar, the congregation sings, "This is the feast of victory" (*HWB* 476) and joyfully shares a meal in honor of Christ's resurrection.

Three different Communion services with three different biblical themes and three different layers of meaning in the same ritual—all happening within a six-week period. Such practices give evidence of a quiet revolution occurring across the church in connection with our celebrations of Communion.

Wherever I go, Mennonites tell me they are gathering around the Lord's Table more frequently. Though the general custom had been to celebrate Communion twice a year—usually in spring and fall, today's Mennonite congregations typically join in sharing the bread and cup between four and 12 times per year. My best hunch is that the average is about six celebrations per year. Why is this shift occurring? What does it mean?

Pastors and worship leaders have identified several reasons for the shift toward more frequent Communion. One reason is the presence of more and more people in our congregations who have come from other worship traditions where Communion is a regular part of weekly worship. These people tell their pastors: "We enjoy Mennonite worship, but we miss gathering at the Lord's Table. Can't we have Communion more often?"

Another reason is the revival of interest in ritual in our culture. In our highly secular age, people find themselves reaching for more direct experience of the divine. Though the scientific age discouraged an expectation that we might meet God in concrete ways, modern people are rediscovering the power of symbols to open pathways of awareness of God's presence and grace. Because of the capacity of symbols to touch the heart as well as the mind, sharing bread and drinking the cup together at the Lord's Table becomes a grace-filled encounter that transforms us more and more into the likeness of Christ.

A third reason for more frequent Communion is the result of historical study. If both the early church and our Anabaptist ancestors found this celebration life-giving, many are asking whether we ought to pay more attention to it as well. After all, Menno Simons wrote ecstatically about the "glorious and holy mysteries of the Lord's Supper":

"Oh, delightful assembly and Christian marriage feast ... where the hungry consciences are fed with the heavenly bread of the divine Word, with the wine of the Holy Ghost, and where the peaceful, joyous souls sing and play before the Lord" (*Complete Works of Menno Simons*).

The growing interest in Communion can be interpreted as a desire for deeper communion with Christ and with Christ's body. One way

According to the Schleitheim Articles of 1527 (an early Anabaptist confession of faith), celebrating the Lord's Supper was a regular feature of Anabaptist worship. Though no one has been able to document precisely why that practice was discarded, some historians suggest that a fear of unworthy Communion along with stringent practices of preparation may eventually have discouraged frequent observances (see the article on the Lord's Supper in *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. V).

More frequent celebration of Communion is promoted, however, by the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. The commentary on Article 12, "Communion," says: "Our churches are encouraged to celebrate the Lord's Supper more frequently so that they may participate in the rich meanings of this event for the worship and life of the church."

for the church to encourage such communion is to expand the celebration to make room for more layers of biblical meaning. When we celebrate Communion just twice a year, our typically sober, reflective services tend to focus only on Jesus' death. Though the story of Jesus' suffering is central to the gospel, it is not the only layer of meaning present in the Lord's Supper. Jesus himself eagerly looked forward to the coming kingdom (Luke 22:15-18) as he shared the last meal with his disciples.

Rather than limit ourselves to only one dimension of the meaning of Communion, we can explore this meal ritual in depth and discover how broad and deep is the grace that God offers us through it. Some congregations, for example, are experimenting with offering Communion services that connect with a particular season of the Christian year (as described in the opening paragraph). Another approach is to start with biblical stories or themes and ask how these themes and images might shape a Communion service. With each theme come certain questions to consider:

- What dimension of God's love and grace is highlighted by this story?
- What ritual actions might help us experience God's grace more fully?
- Who should serve Communion?
- How should people be served?
- What kind of bread would be appropriate?
- What kind of drink?
- Could the type of vessels used add to the meaning?

As examples of such an approach, the following biblical stories and images might serve as a starting place:

The exodus of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt can be seen as a dramatic prefiguring of our deliverance from sin and destruction through the death of Jesus (see Exodus 12-15, John 1:29-34, Romans 8:1-17). Plain pottery vessels, unleavened bread and freedom music (Hebrew songs, African-American spirituals or South African freedom songs) could amplify this biblical theme.

Jesus' suffering and death on the cross is, of course, the central story for Communion (see Isaiah 53, the Passion narratives of the Gospels, John 6:35-40, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 or Hebrews 10:19-23). As we remember Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, we offer thanks and praise for the gift of our salvation. Hearty bread, earthenware vessels and Communion served by leaders who represent Christ (rather than sharing with one another) as well as Passion hymns such as "O sacred Head, now wounded" (*HWB* 252) emphasize this dimension of Communion.

The journey to Emmaus in which the resurrected Christ walks with and is revealed to two disciples is another story with strong connections to Communion (see Luke 24:13-35, Romans 6:1-11, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Galatians 2:19-20, Ephesians 2:1-10). As we break bread together, we also experience the risen Christ in our midst. Light, yeasty bread (such as pascha or other Easter breads), sparkling or homemade juice, a festive table and Communion hymns such as "Become to us the living bread" (*HWB* 475) highlight the presence of the living Christ.

The table fellowship of the early church emphasizes the unity of Christ's body and invites us to become one in Christ as we gather at the Lord's Table (Acts 2:46, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, Ephesians 2:19-22). Everyday table settings; a single loaf of bread—hearty, homebaked or braided; one cup rather than individual cups; people serving each other (emphasizing the horizontal relationship), and songs of unity such as "Ubi caritas et amor" (*HWB* 452) or "I come with joy to meet my Lord" (*HWB* 459) are fitting.

In our highly secular age, people find themselves reaching for more direct experience of the divine.

The messianic banquet in which people of all nations gather at the Lamb's Feast (Isaiah 25:6-10; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 5:6-14, 19:1-10) is the feast toward which all our Communion celebrations point. Our hope in the coming fulfillment of God's dream of shalom for the entire universe can be symbolized by a table covered in brightly colored cloth that overflows with the breads of all nations. Such songs as "God loves all his many people" (*HWB* 397) from Zaire or "At the Lamb's high feast" (HWB 262) strike a celebrative note.

Although many more biblical stories could be used to suggest themes for Communion (for example, the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 in Mark 6:30-44 or the parable of the great banquet in Luke 14:15-24), these few suggestions may inspire worship planners to expand beyond our usually somber Communion services that focus only on Jesus' death.

It should be noted, however, that these suggestions are not meant to ignore the great value of repetition in our rituals. They are offered to encourage us to benefit from fresh ways of experiencing Communion as we open ourselves to the many ways Christ wants to meet us in the ritual of eating and drinking. In so doing, we will begin to fulfill the hope of our new confession of faith that "the rich meanings of this event for the worship and life of the church" will be reclaimed.

Marlene Kropf teaches courses in worship and spiritual formation at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. She also serves half time as minister of worship and spirituality for Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. She is a member of Belmont Mennonite Church, which celebrates communion six to eight times per year as well as at each service of baptism.

For further reading:

- *Bread of Life and Cup of Joy: Newer Ecumenical Perspectives on the Eucharist* by Horton Davies (Eerdmans, 1993)
- *The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World* by Monika Hellwig (Sheed and Ward, 1992)
- *Communion Shapes Character* by Eleanor Kreider (Herald Press, 1997)
- *Table Talk: Resources for the Communion Meal* by Jane McAvoy (Chalice Press, 1993)
- *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism* by John D. Rempel (Herald Press, 1993)
- *Minister's Manual* edited by John D. Rempel (Faith & Life Press and Herald Press, 1998)

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MCC Paraguay pioneer leaves Chaco legacy

NEWTON, Kan.—When Mennonite Central Committee workers Robert G. and Myrtle Unruh arrived in Paraguay in 1951, the Mennonite colonists' way of life was primitive. When the Unruhs left in 1983, it was prosperous.

Robert Unruh, whose agricultural innovations helped tame the "Green Hell" of the Chaco, died March 5 at the age of 75 at his daughter's home in rural Newton. A funeral service was held March 9 at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Among Unruh's legacies were introducing improved strains of crops and grasses, crossbreeding livestock and establishing a tree nursery.

Myrtle Unruh died in 1996.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Longtime AMBS professor dies at 83

LITITZ, Pa.—Former professor and pastor Paul M. Miller died March 3 at the age of 83 at Landis Homes retirement community. He was the founding pastor of East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church and taught pastoral counseling and practical theology at Goshen Biblical Seminary and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries from 1952 to 1985. A memorial service was held March 7 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Zimbabwe BIC, MCC help drought victims

AKRON, Pa.—Zimbabwe's Brethren in Christ church, assisted by $10,000 from Mennonite Central Committee, is purchasing and distributing maize for people in a drought-stricken area of the country. More than 3,300 people—both BIC members and others—will receive enough food to last until harvest. If rains continue, harvest will be in June at the earliest. *—MCC News Service*

Nebraska church hosts international visitors

HENDERSON, Neb.—One hundred young people from 30 countries gathered at Bethesda Mennonite Church Feb. 3-9 for the annual mid-year conference for participants in Mennonite Central Committee's International Exchange Program. Among other activities, all participants shared about their home cultures during an evening program for the community. For example, the women from France told how they miss the cheese from their country since there are 350 varieties. The participants from Taiwan reported that restaurants in their country do not serve fortune cookies. *—Bethany Mennonite Visitor*

Mary E. Klassen

Christine Pohl, professor from Asbury Theological Seminary, gives the 1997-98 Theological Lectureship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Speaker addresses possibilities of hospitality

ELKHART, Ind.—Hospitality is life giving, Christine Pohl said in the 1997-98 Theological Lectureship on "Christian Hospitality" at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Feb. 18-19. "[Hospitality] can be a sign of hope and a healing presence in a fragmented world," said Pohl, associate professor of social ethics at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky.

She said the possibility that the stranger at the door could be Jesus has long undergirded the practice of hospitality and has helped believers recognize that every person is worthy of love.

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Events

The Giving Project Gathering, May 1-2, Mennonite Community Church, Fresno, Calif. Contact: 219-296-6236.

Concert of combined men's choirs of Salem and Salem-Zion Mennonite churches, May 3, Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Office '98 gathering for Mennonite agency and congregational support staff, May 28-30, Lebanon (Pa.) Valley College. Contact: Carol E. Kauffman, 717-273-8871.

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Workers

Mast, LeRoy was installed as pastor of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Hammondsport, N.Y., on March 1.

Miller, Corey will begin a pastorate at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., in June.

Sollenberger, Marcus and Glenna, Dallas, have started a three-year assignment with Eastern Mennonite Missions and Wycliffe Bible Translators in Porto Velho, Brazil.

Ward, Frank will end a pastorate at Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan., in August.

Zuercher, Melanie began as news service editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church on Jan. 26.

Births

Bontrager, Savannah Rae, March 10, to Craig and Karen (Stutzman) Bontrager, Milford, Neb.

Chappell-Deckert, Lydia Kate, March 10, to Aaron and Jennifer Chappell-Deckert, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Cross, Madison Danielle, Feb. 24, to Holly (Troyer) and Tad Cross, Waterford, Pa.

Gingerich, Elias Gabriel, Feb. 6, to Dwight and Maureen (Rhodes) Gingerich, Kalona, Iowa.

Hunsberger, Josiah Aaron, March 9, to Heidi (Godshall) and Robert Hunsberger, Hickory, N.C.

Longacre, Benjamin Paul, Jan. 21, to James Longacre and Ann Reedy, Washington.

Roth, Garrett Payton, March 7, to Clark and Debra (Swartzendruber) Roth, Hesston, Kan.

Setargie, Joshua Tesfaye, Dec. 24, 1997, to Nigist (Assefa) and Tesfaye Setargie, Upper Darby, Pa.

Stauffer, Jared Lee, Feb. 19, to Bonnie (Goertzen) and Lanny Stauffer, Beaver Crossing, Neb.

Troyer, Anna Louise Marie, Feb. 3, to David and Lynn (McDowell) Troyer, Alva, Fla.

Weaver, Donovan Tye, March 2, to Darryl E. and Janice (Garber) Weaver, Willow Street, Pa.

Wiebe, Stephan Gerhard Fast, Feb. 27, to Deborah Fast and Menno Wiebe, Ephrata, Pa.

Zimmerman, Makena Renee, Feb. 28, to Karmen (Yoder) and Philip Zimmerman.

Marriages

Cerceo/Oyer: Mike Cerceo, Seattle, and Sarah Oyer, Seattle, Feb. 28, by Firman Gingerich.

Derstine/Moyer: Michael Derstine, Telford, Pa., and Andrea Moyer, Telford, Feb. 28, by Larry Moyer and John Ehst.

Martin/Miller: Darrel Martin, Minneapolis, and Cynthia Miller, Minneapolis, Feb. 21, by Bob Miller.

Deaths

Bishop, J. Vernon, 76, Doylestown, Pa., died Feb. 26 of organ failure. Survivors: wife, Anna; children James, Robert, J. Eric, Rebecca Swartzendruber; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: March 2 at Blooming Glen, Pa., by Truman Brunk and David Stevens.

Detweiler, Martha, 74, Souderton, Pa., died March 1 of lymphoma. Burial: March 3 at Lansdale, Pa., by Elmer Frederick.

Doell, John R., 89, Henderson, Neb., died March 5. Survivors: wife, Malinda; children Leona Yoder, J. Homer, Jean Cox; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren, Burial: March 9 at Henderson by Weldon Martens.

Epp, Marvin J., 90, Lynden, Wash., died Feb. 16. Survivors: wife, Annie; children Merlin, Marvin; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 19 by Steve Schroeder.

Fries, John S., 62, Sarasota, Fla., died Feb. 27 of heart problems. Survivors: wife, Margaret; children Ann Miller, Johnathan, Ted; four grandchildren; parents, Clarence and Arie Fries. Burial: March 2 at Sarasota by Barry Loop.

Gingerich, Clifton Wayne, 85, Iowa City, Iowa, died Feb. 24. Survivor: wife, Muriel. Burial: Feb. 27 at Iowa City by Jay Miiller and Noah Helmuth.

Halteman, Stella N. Alderfer, 100, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 23. Burial: Feb. 27 at Franconia, Pa., by Steven Landis, John Ehst and Floyd Hackman.

Keller, Harry F., 87, Bridgewater, Va., died Feb. 15. Survivors: wife, Margaret; children Louise Heatwole, Roy, Stanley; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 18 at Dayton, Va., by Joseph Shenk, Larry Nesselrodt and James Beckwith.

Roth, Ethel I. Oswald, 87, Morton, Ill., died Feb. 25. Survivors: children Derald, Kenneth, Leonard, Wayne, Richard, Mary Rechkemmer, Janet Jourdan; 17 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 28 at Tremont, Ill., by Doane Brubaker.

Searles, Dan, 81, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 18 of cancer. Survivor: son, Daniel.

Stuckey, Bertha Frey, 86, Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 11. Survivors: Allen, Annabelle Lerch, Orlene Mason, Louise Rudo; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 14 at Stryker, Ohio, by Allen Rutter and Wendy Miller.

Whirledge, Beulah Shrock, 83, Millersburg, Ind., died Feb. 11. Survivors: husband, William; children Marilyn Tylor, Arlis Krenicky, Almeda Zumbrum, Alden; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Feb. 14 at Goshen, Ind., by Robert Shreiner and Vernon Bontreger.

Yoder, Rose, 43, Elverson, Pa., died Feb. 2 of a brain tumor. Survivors: parents, Thomas and Fannie Yoder. Burial: Feb. 5 at Morgantown, Pa., by Nilson Assis.

Classifieds

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, 45 miles south of Pittsburgh, needs a ***program director.*** Primary function to plan and guide the adult and youth programs. Serves with the management team and assists with development activities.

Contact Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Rt. 5 Box 145, Mount Pleasant, PA 15666; 800-839-1021. 724-423-2056.

Spruce Lake Retreat, a Mennonite retreat center and camp in northeastern Pennsylvania, needs ***food service assistants*** June through August. Experience preferred. Call 800-822-7505 or fax 717-595-0328.

OrrVilla Retirement Community, Orrville, Ohio, seeks ***executive director.*** Responsibilities include overall program, financial and staff management, maintaining relations with the church and local community and providing leadership and vision to a growing retirement community. Qualifications include organizational, communication, human resource and financial management skills.

Send confidential inquiries and/or resume to Morris Stutzman, president, 2171-B Eagle Pass, Wooster, OH 44691.

Belleville Mennonite School needs a ***choral director and music teacher*** beginning in August 1998. Please contact Ray Baker, superintendent, P.O. Box 847, Belleville, PA 17004; 717-935-2184.

Bethany Christian Schools (grades 6 to 12; enrollment 285) invites applications for 1998-99 for the following positions: ***assistant principal*** and ***sixth-grade teacher.*** The assistant principal oversees the daily operation of the school and serves as an instructional leader. Applicants should hold a master's in administration and hold, or be qualified to obtain, an Indiana administrator's license. The sixth-grade teacher, who will teach in a self-contained classroom, should hold an elementary teaching license.

Please forward resumes to Allan Dueck, principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499; 219-534-2567; fax 219-533-0150; email bethany@npcc.net.

New Covenant Christian School: *Teaching position in secondary math/science.* Currently a middle school, adding ninth grade in 1998-99. Additional grade each year following.

Contact Neal Eckert, New Covenant Christian School, 452 Ebenezer Road, Lebanon, PA 17046; 717-274-2423. Member of Lancaster Area Council of Mennonite Schools.

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Single & Single Again Retreat, April 17-19, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. This is a weekend of sharing pain, praise and renewal for people widowed, never married or single from separation or divorce. This year's theme is "What does it take to be real?" For more information call 800-839-1021, 724-423-2056.

Friendship Community, Lititz, Pa.: Full-time ***program supervisor*** position available. Qualifications: college degree and experience with people with developmental disabilities. Salary and excellent health plan. Call Denise Herr at 717-656-2466.

Waynesboro Mennonite Church seeks ***minister of youth and Christian education.*** For more information contact Stan Kauffman, Rt. 6 Box 56K, Waynesboro, VA 22980; 540-943-1324; email sdkauffman@juno.com.

Classified ad space is available in *The Mennonite* at $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

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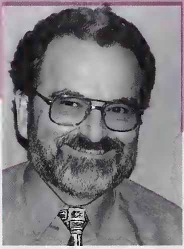

by J. Lorne Peachey

A funny thing happened on the way to court

If anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well.—Matthew 5:40

Last issue we reported that some Mennonites in India are suing each other (page 9, March 17). Two men who believe they should be the head leader of a conference have taken each other to court over their perceived right. In the words of J.P. Masih, who moderated Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta in 1997: "This is affecting the spiritual life of our congregations, ... it's a bad testimony to the wider community... and it's wasting a lot of money in court."

Before looking at this as just another example of a group of Mennonites in another country not understanding who Anabaptists are or want to be, consider what's developing among North American Mennonites. My list from the last six months includes:

Taking to court, or threatening to do so, is using power for the same purpose: domination, control, ego-gratification, politics and the defense of individual privileges.

- Two longtime leaders get into a disagreement with their congregation about their retirement. They tell the congregation they have consulted a lawyer and have grounds for a suit if their wishes aren't followed.
- A leader is accused of sexual misconduct. He consults attorney friends inside and outside the church and tells the investigative committee he has been advised to sue, which he may do if they continue to talk with his accusers.
- A group of Mennonites and others plan a recreation park in their community. They are taken to court by the opposition, which also includes a number of Mennonites.
- A member feels she is not being treated right by the church. She goes to her attorney and asks him to contact the church about her unhappiness. It's the first the church's leaders realize there is a problem.

Used to be that suits and courts were something Mennonites avoided. Jesus' words in Matthew 5:40, if taken literally, seemed to demand that. That way of life was mostly an unwritten assumption, though the Schleitheim Confession of 1527 hints this is how disciples should live.

As North American society has become increasingly litigious, however, we Mennonites have found that sometimes we do need to go to court: for business, when neighbors are being oppressed. And the courts have helped give us the right not to bear arms and to worship as we please.

But a funny thing has happened on our way to court. We've discovered there's power there. Wielded in our favor, that power can give us our "rights." The court's reputation can do the same. Talk about suing, and people listen.

We especially listen when the talk turns to suing even each other—which we Mennonites are threatening to do these days. More than one church committee, commission or program board has spent hours deliberating on its future because of the threat of a suit—not from the surrounding culture, from which Christians might expect such threats. No, they come from inside, from fellow Mennonites who have learned there's power in the word "suit."

One wonders how Jesus would word Matthew 5:40 today. At the very least, he might have us reread what we agreed together in 1995 that we believe in *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective:*

- From Article 22 on peace, justice and nonresistance: "The same Spirit that empowered Jesus also empowers us ... to forgive rather than to seek revenge, to practice right relationships [and] to rely on the community of faith to settle disputes."
- From the commentary to Article 23 on the church's relation to government and society: "Individual Christians need the church to help them discern how to be in the world without belonging to the world ... [including] using the secular courts."

In one part of the Mennonite world these days, brothers are taking each other to court. In another, we're threatening to do so. Both are using power for the same purpose: domination, control, ego-gratification, politics and the defense of individual rights and privileges.

Living in the world without belonging to the world may call for difficult sacrifices in the future. One of these should be our right to go to court—or to use the threat of doing so to get what we perceive to be our right.

Perhaps Jesus knew this would be the case. For he uttered this remarkable conclusion to his words about suing: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).—*jlp*

No issue next week: In line with our 48-times-a-year schedule, we will not produce an issue of *The Mennonite* next week, the fifth Tuesday of the month. Our next issue will be dated April 7 and will focus on the theme of resurrection. —*Editor*

the Mennonite

April 7, 1998

Easter transforms reality

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7 Group to study membership criteria

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23 How to grow a Mennonite church

The Mennonite welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

On being Mennonite

I'd like to express my appreciation for Clarissa P. Gaff's article, "Being Mennonite Comes Down to Whole Wheat Bread" (*The Mennonite,* Feb. 17). Many of us know what it feels like to be different from those around us. We also know what it feels like to be part of a loving, supportive community. And yes, with all that solid ground beneath us, it is also very possible to "move on, venture out."

I encourage you, Clarissa, to find your place both within the Mennonite community and with people and places beyond it. The mix makes for a very rich and meaningful life. *—Betsy Headrick McCrae, Hanoi, Vietnam*

I chuckled all the way through Clarissa Gaff's article. She so aptly notes the tension among appreciating what is Mennonite, the attraction of the good in other faiths and the call to venture out of our comfort zone. Thank you for your insights and humor, Clarissa.*—Marilyn Rempel, Denver*

Power and mystery

I am a victim of sexual misconduct. I was raised in a devout Christian home, and my perpetrator was a male authority figure, someone whom I trusted and believed to abide by moral and ethical standards. After years of silence, I am seeing a therapist and beginning to realize that an important step of my recovery is speaking out about abuse and its impact.

This letter does not dispute that John Howard Yoder completed the "church discipline process" or felt remorse for his actions. Instead, it questions how quickly the church absolves those who abuse their power and how easily they expect the victims to forgive. When I shared my particular experience with a leader in the ministry, the advice I received was that I would have to find some way to forgive. That placed all responsibility on me. I am not responsible for what happened to me; I am responsible for coping with it. While God has been a comfort, the church has offered little.

The glowing tributes by Ted Grimsrud and Gordon Houser (*The Mennonite,* March 3), make my blood run cold when they say John Howard Yoder was a great role model for many. Leaders are leaders because they are expected to be able to set a good example for others. Do we, the Mennonite church, no longer expect our role models and figures in power to live by the standards they proclaim?

Perhaps this letter is written so that I, and people like me, may experience some healing instead of feeling that once again men in power and the church have made their somewhat one-sided views heard.*—Name withheld by request*

I want to express my deep appreciation for publishing the two articles on John Howard Yoder (*The Mennonite,* March 3). John and I grew up in the same large congregation in Ohio, and he was my roommate through his years at Goshen (Ind.) College. I had accommodated myself early on to his superior intellect and enjoyed many of his eccentricities. I was deeply disappointed when I learned of his indiscretions but could never believe that these invalidated his spiritual insights, though the reality of both in the same person remained a troubling mystery. I believe it most appropriate that *The Mennonite* recognized John's enormous contribution to the Mennonite church and to all of Christendom.*—Gerald Studer, Lansdale, Pa.*

Complete forgiveness

The article "Forgiveness: What It Is, What It Is Not" (*The Mennonite,* Feb. 24) left me disappointed. Even though the bold print stated that only God can grant absolution, the article did not remind me of the complete forgiveness that I have only through Christ. I pray that Michael B. Ross believes and accepts this, even though it was not included in his academic article.*—Elda Bachman, North Newton, Kan.*

Enjoyment, engagement and anticipation

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the two feature articles on John Howard Yoder and postmodernism (*The Mennonite,* March 3). Ted Grimsrud's personal story about Yoder's life and writings and Michael A. King's clever application of the Tower of Babel were very engaging. I look forward to reading future articles of this quality.*—Ted Lewis, Pawnee Rock, Kan.*

Reading problems

The smaller and dimmer type, the more printing against colored backgrounds and the more nonblack ink, the more difficult it is for some of us 65 and older to read. I guess we don't need to read the Classifieds, but they might be of interest, even if we are not job hunting. We might also be interested in For the Record.

Big type or little type, keep up the good job of putting out *The Mennonite.* We'll read it one way or the other, even if we find it necessary to get a magnifying glass.*—Marvin H. Ewert, Newton, Kan.*

the Mennonite

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the Mennonite

Incorporating *Gospel Herald* (1908-1998) and *The Mennonite* (1885-1998)

The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453.

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say readers say

I read that people were having trouble reading the small print on the glossy paper. I do not consider myself to be old, but I have the same problem trying to read it. Then I would get tired of the hassle and not bother reading anymore.—*Leonard D. Hershey, Wadsworth, Ohio*

Persuading for peace

In Terry Berg's letter (*The Mennonite*, March 10), he professes to be "shocked and upset" at United Nations Ambassador Bill Richardson's assertion of an "autonomous national interest" on the part of the U.S. government. Does Terry really think the U.S. government is a pacifist organization or that Bill Richardson is a Mennonite? I have a master's degree in international relations, and I must say that so long as nation-states exist, there will be compelling national interests which will motivate their views and actions in both peace and war.

I find that quite a few Mennonites who profess such dismay at the U.S government's failure to live up to their own religious standards also harbor substantial anger and an inability to see the other side. That attitude makes it impossible for them to participate in any winning over of that other side.

I am an "unrepentant," retired military professional and member of the local Mennonite congregation, and I find it next to impossible to relate to these "militant Mennonites." If I am ever to be swayed to a pacifist stance, it will be through the apologetics of those who act out their faith in daily life, rather than those who would impute their faith to the world at large and then be shocked and upset when the world fails to measure up.—*Lee E. Gourey, Grand Marais, Mich.*

continued on page 4

Because of the volume of mail we're receiving for Readers Say (now close to 20 letters per week), we can no longer guarantee publication. As much as possible, we will try to print parts of all letters that we receive, though space limitations may force us to choose representative letters about one topic or letters that have a new or different viewpoint about something already discussed in Readers Say.

We continue to welcome letters, both for publication and for our information or help. Our volume of mail also means, however, that we may not be able to acknowledge or answer all the letters that we receive. *—Editor*

Adult witness

Seeing the first covers of *The Mennonite,* I wondered if this is a magazine for adults. As this comes into our homes, is it necessary to view children at play and a child's drawing? Please remember that this goes all over the nation and possibly the world. Do you not desire to extend the message of Christ to adults?

I am extremely unhappy that our Mennonite Church is going along with the world in its use of caricatures and out-of-proportion "art." Let's remember our Christian witness.*—Mrs. Wallace Engel, Princeton, Ill.*

For the record

J. Lorne Peachey's editorial "An Open Letter to My Niece" (*The Mennonite,* March 10) was an open acknowledgment of a time when it's better to not change than to do otherwise. Mennonites are a people who are concerned with the lives of others. To ignore the births, marriages and deaths of the brotherhood is to selectively deprive the meaning of life.

I am not embarrassed to be identified as an "ethnic" Mennonite. Furthermore, I am not humiliated nor do I feel lessened by being tagged a white, middle-class member of the church or anything other than an Asian, Hispanic or African-American Mennonite. I have heard more than enough to know the source of the complaint is not motivated by concern for Scripture.*—John Zook, East Waterford, Pa.*

I am glad you kept births, marriages and deaths in *The Mennonite.* I have lived in five communities and would not know of deaths of friends and acquaintances if not for these announcements.*—Paul J. Glanzer, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Please don't quit printing the data in For the Record. People today write very few letters anymore. As families move, they have no contacts with their former communities. If you discontinue all this news, many people would lose touch even more with what little community they have.*—Ruth Ressler, Orrville, Ohio*

As former curator of the Mennonite Historical Library in Goshen, Ind., I must report that births, marriages and deaths are more heavily used than the articles.*—Nelson P. Springer, Goshen, Ind.*

Information and communication

The Bible speaks of same-sex sexual activity only in the context of pagan religious practice or idolatry. Homosexuality involves feelings of affectional affinity toward others of the same gender. Although these feelings may lead to same-sex sexual activity, the context is far different from what the Bible speaks of.

The publication of letters such as Vicki Epp's (*The Mennonite,* Feb.17) is crucial to the forum because it breaks through the wall of misinformation that is so prevalent.*—Steven Johns, Goshen, Ind.*

I see two things missing in most of the letters concerning homosexuality. First, we as Christians love the sinner but hate the sin. The key is repentance. Second, the thought that sexual orientation is based in human biology and genetics has not been proven true. According to the Oct. 23, 1997, *Los Angeles Times,* neuroscientist and psychology professor Marc Breedlove of the University of California at Berkeley has provided evidence from studies on rats which suggest that sexual behavior changes the human brain, not vice versa. *—Arlene Frei, Quakertown, Pa.*

I think it is high time to call a moratorium on letters that deal with homosexuality. In the meantime, I would urge that writers become readers. There is a large number of well written books on the subject from a variety of perspectives. To begin with, I would suggest Frances Greaser Borntrager's book, *And a Time to Die.* Then I would suggest a visit to the local library where the librarian should be able to furnish a number of titles for further reading.*—Stan Liechty, Goshen, Ind.*

Clarification

Following the publication of my article "Make Missions the Priority of Our Giving" (*The Mennonite,* Feb. 24), Mark Vincent of The Giving Project wrote me questioning if my references to the organization were examples of hoarding resources or encouraging generosity.

I used Mark and The Giving Project as examples of how money matters should be handled in churches. I greatly respect the work The Giving Project has done and consider it a vital resource.*—James W. Hanes, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Lacking modesty

When I saw the pose of the young woman as worship leader of the United Kingdom Anabaptist group (*The Mennonite*, Feb. 24), several emotions hit me: shock, disapproval and offense. Where was the biblical principle of modesty found in 1 Timothy 2:9a? The Anabaptist vision is far astray in this photo. *—Freda Maust, Springs, Pa.*

Left: Joe Longacher (foreground) and others of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church general boards cast votes during their joint meeting March 20-24 in North Newton, Kan. Although the boards conducted business together, they still had to register votes separately. To do so, the GC board raised sheets of purple paper and the MC board used yellow paper. Right: Board members Miriam Martin and Duane Oswald confer.

Border to define church organization

General boards approve U.S., Canadian structures

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—The new Mennonite Church will consist of parallel U.S. and Canadian structures, the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) general boards have decided. What the two country entities will look like and how they will be connected is now up to several committees.

The two boards, meeting jointly March 20-24 at Bethel College, approved the "one denomination, two-country structure" proposal after an original plan was criticized for de-emphasizing binational relationships.

Under the adopted proposal, a U.S. church body will be created, the current Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC)—which includes most GC and MC members in the country—will be reshaped and the two structures will be in "intentional partnership." A U.S. committee and a Canadian committee will be formed to work on the church bodies in each country, while the Integration Committee (IC) will address how the two countries should be connected.

Canadian voices—particularly from CMC, which is affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church—have long advocated a two-country structure. "For many Canadian Mennonites, the General Conference is a U.S. conference," said GC General Board member Waldemar Regier from Waterloo, Ont.

But the two-country idea was slow in gaining U.S. support until a regional model—in which the integrated church would have been organized into four regions—received little support at four consultations held across the United States and Canada during the past fall and winter.

"The U.S. must do what it previously has been unwilling to do, that is, form its own identity," MC general secretary George Stoltzfus told the boards.

> The U.S. must do what it previously has been unwilling to do, that is, form its own identity.
>
> —*George Stoltzfus*

The approved proposal was a revamping of one brought by the GC and MC general secretaries. That plan placed primary emphasis on the country, not binational, structures, thereby making a U.S. entity essential. According to the original proposal, "Creating new binational structures that are more prominent than country structures would serve only to maintain the status quo, providing no incentive to create a new U.S. structure."

But Canadian delegates objected to downplaying links across the U.S.-Canadian border. "There's enough similarity between Canadian and U.S. culture to warrant a binational body," Regier said.

The original plan was never voted on. While the reworked proposal was unanimously accepted, there was not agreement on how strong the binational level should be.

"There is something good about being two countries rather than presenting North America as one big church," said GC General Board member Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower from Fresno, Calif.

But Jim Harder of the GC board said he fears a weak U.S.-Canadian partnership that will become "working together when convenient."

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Border to define organization

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"That puts our two peoples in the same relationship as Mennonite World Conference is right now, ... and when budgets are tight, the first thing to go is fraternal relationships," said Harder, from North Newton, Kan.

IC co-chair Dorothy Nickel Friesen from Bluffton, Ohio, called the binational level "a denominational bridge," the place for work such as confession of faith, vision statement and some programs such a publishing.

MC General Board member Duane Oswald from Fresno, Calif., worried about placing too much power at that level. "As soon as the top starts developing staff, starts developing procedure, then the U.S. will start dominating the binational," he said.

But GC General Board member Lois Thieszen Preheim from Aurora, Neb., said, "If there is no decision-making body between [the United States and Canada], I say in 10 years we will be separate."

The two country committees will report to the IC in September, and the IC will report to the joint general boards in November. IC co-chair John Murray from Topeka, Ind., said the integration timetable has not been changed with the new plan. GC and MC delegates are expected to take final action on the merger in July 1999.

The adoption of the two-country model clears the way for the GC commissions and the MC program boards to work on integration issues. "Program board people are saying they can't do anything until we have more clarity," said GC general secretary James Schrag.—*Rich Preheim*

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., was the center of decision making for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) March 19-24. Some 300 people from all GC and MC boards, commissions and groups met throughout the campus in both separate and joint sessions—the first such gathering of all GC and MC organizations in one place at one time. It was also the first time the GC and MC general boards conducted all their business in joint sessions. More news from the meetings will be found in next week's *The Mennonite*.

CHM, COM, MBM move closer to merger as boards resolve to function as one

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Seeking to define "a clear vision for mission in a new church," the three mission agencies of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) have agreed to act as one.

During their joint meetings March 20-23 at Bethel College, the boards of the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM), Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) voted unanimously in favor of joint planning and decision making for an integrated mission effort.

Even before the meeting, the three boards had planned to meet at the same time and place with some work taking place jointly until their agencies were merged. But they changed their understanding of that relationship.

"We are now one group acknowledging that we need to do some things separately, rather than three groups groping to understand each other in the fog," said COM chair Tom Lehman. "We will conceive of ourselves as having one set of tasks to be addressed together. If we have to break into three here and there, so be it."

Board chairs and agency executives were directed to work on specifics of the arrangement, which will allow the boards to meet, plan and work cooperatively as they retain legally independent organizational structures until their agencies officially become one.

"Meeting as one board would encourage and facilitate setting of priorities and program integration," said MBM board member Nancy Heisey, who proposed the change.

Representatives of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada Ministries Commission, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Virginia Mennonite Conference and Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions also participated in the discussions.

"We affirm the importance of defining and following a clear vision for mission in a new church as we work at integration issues," said the approved statement, which outlined a plan for a consultation "to assess the changing conditions for mission and to articulate our shared vision and goals for mission."

Although some program from each agency already is integrated across denominational lines, the statement recommended to the GC and MC general boards that "there be a careful study of structures with the specific intent that new structures respond to the emerging missional reality rather than patterns from the past." (See "In other business ..." page 7.)

"It is the vision—not the organization, the structure or the funds—that is driving us," said MBM board member Tesfatsion Dallelew. "As a result of that vision, let the organization be birthed that is functional."—*Tom Price for MBM and GCMC news services*

Group to study membership criteria

Polity-related questions, differences abound

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—In voting against a joint action on membership by the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church general boards, H. James Smith and Jeff Wright came out at the same place—but for entirely opposite reasons.

The boards, meeting March 20-24 at Bethel College, passed a recommendation to "clarify criteria" for area conference and congregational membership in the new Mennonite Church. But Smith and Wright's opposition highlighted the stickiness of church membership and discipline issues.

Current area conferences and congregations should not be grandfathered into the new denomination but rather need to first agree to as-yet-unspecified polity criteria, says Smith, of the MC General Board.

Meanwhile, GC General Board member Wright wants no restrictions placed on an area conference's ability to grant membership and discipline congregations.

Smith, representing Illinois Conference, told the boards that questions of polity could bring GC-MC integration to a standstill in his conference—and maybe elsewhere. Illinois has disciplined two congregations because they accept homosexuals as members. Homosexuality was not directly addressed during the meeting.

Smith circulated two proposals that membership, discipline and governance policies be created before allowing area conference and congregational memberships in the new denomination. His proposals were not acted on.

"If everybody's in, why bother [with setting membership criteria]?" Smith said. "If we're saying everybody's in, ... I know of one conference that will have a hard time voting for it."

Wright, however, decried the possible formation of "a polity czar" to set such criteria for the church.

"That is an area conference matter ... and should not be addressed on this level," said Wright, the Commission on Education representative on the GC board and a conference minister from Pacific Southwest Conference.

He said he viewed the impending GC-MC merger as "an integration of sovereign [area] conferences."

GC moderator Darrell Fast said he assumed that all GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada members would automatically become members of the new denomination.

"We are all in conferences and congregations that belong to our three denominations," he said. "I would like to see an assumption in this document that will affirm that."

The general boards decided that criteria for membership will be proposed by a group appointed by the joint executive committee of the two boards. The group will bring an initial report to the executive committee in August.

Glen Hostetler, representing Lancaster Conference on the MC board, said the volatility surrounding polity is reason to begin a clarification process. "There seems to be some feeling and emotion behind this issue of membership to warrant a separate group to work on it," he said. "Otherwise, the process of integration will be held hostage by these issues which have been with us for a long, long time and will be with us after integration."—*Rich Preheim*

Rich Preheim

Members of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church general boards hold a discussion during their March 20-24 meeting.

In other business ...

To help formulate the program boards' position in the new Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church general boards approved hiring an outside consultant for an organizational study. It is to be conducted by the Chicago-based Center for Parish Development at a cost of $45,000. A prelimary report is to be completed by August.

The boards also approved a recommendation to evaluate integration in 2005, six years after the anticipated final delegate approval of the merger next year.

Although no action was taken on delegate body formation, it was discussed at length and will be addressed by the committees working on the U.S. and Canadian country structures. The Integration Committee is suggesting blended assemblies of one congregational delegate per 100 members and one conference representative per 1,000 members for a total delegate body of about 2,500 seats. Racial and ethnic groups would have 10 percent of those seats.—*Rich Preheim*

Gift brings thaw for Korean ministry

New furnace arrives as fuel prices continue climb

NEWTON, Kan.—When Chris and Laura Mullet Koop send "warm greetings from Korea," they mean it literally.

The Koops serve in South Korea under the auspices of the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM), Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). They live and work at Abba Shalom Koinonia, a retreat center and Christian community located close to the Demilitarized Zone between South and North Korea.

The main source of heat for Abba Shalom's two buildings is hot water pipes in the floors. The water had been heated by four oil-fueled boilers, and the center was spending close to $2,000 a month on fuel oil. The guesthouse had been left cold because of the cost of fuel.

But in mid-February, a five-ton truck pulled into the Abba Shalom driveway carrying what the community hopes is the solution to its heat problems: a Canadian-built wood-water furnace, which heats water by burning wood.

Abba Shalom last fall received a financial contribution from COM and MCC. "Knowing the difficulties that Abba went through already last year needing large amounts of oil costing large amounts of money, we brought up the suggestion of using the money to buy a wood-water furnace," Chris Koop says. "Everyone sounded interested, so from there we connected with Ed Friesen of Friesen Built in Winnipeg about getting a furnace."

The MCC-COM donation covered purchasing and shipping. Friesen donated some extras including thermostats and motors.

"We also got a new chainsaw at half price from a shop in Winnipeg," Koop says. "We'd been cutting wood with handsaws in anticipation of the new furnace."

A South Korean church member who is an electrical engineering professor volunteered his time and paid for the services of a friend to set up the new boiler.

The wood-water furnace now heats both buildings at Abba Shalom. In early March, four Korean soldiers (soliders in Korea frequently do community service work) helped dig an 80-foot-long trench from the boiler house to the residence building, where the Koops and the eight Korean community members live.

"Oil costs here have skyrocketed since the economy fell apart late last year," Koop says. "So this wood furnace will take away some of the financial stress that Abba has experienced as a result."—*Melanie Zuercher for GCMC, MBM and MCC news services*

Following in the tornado's path

Sheldon Burkhalter

Goshen (Ind.) College students (left to right) Melissa Fisher, Dustin Miller and Rebecca Dengler clean debris left by a Feb. 22 tornado in Sanford, Fla. The students and the 23 other members of Goshen's chamber choir, on a spring break concert tour last month, spent a day working with Mennonite Disaster Service. MDS has set up project headquarters at a local Girl Scout camp and is accepting volunteers for rebuilding work in the community.

Renewed unrest causes workers to evacuate again

MAZAR-E-SHARIF, Afghanistan—Renewed hostilities in Afghanistan's ongoing civil unrest have prompted three MBM workers to evacuate this northen city for the third time in a year. Bill and Phyllis Miller of Goshen, Ind., and Sheryl Martin of Ephrata, Pa., were flown from Mazar-E-Sharif by the International Red Cross in mid-March.

Martin had returned to the city to retrieve belongings abandoned following her family's evacuation last September. Martin, her husband, Steve, and their 2-year-old daughter are now in the capital city of Kabul. Sheryl is a nurse, and Steve is an accountant for an international nongovernmental organization (NGO).

The Millers provide logistical support for an NGO.

Both families are expected to return as soon as the area is secure again.—*MBM News Service*

MCC photo by Tony Siemens

The Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored Indonesian Cultural Team performs at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa., during its recent North American visit. The team's 16 members have since returned home, where they plan to continue performing as a way to share the gospel. The team also hopes to travel to China and Mongolia.

Indonesians finish faith-sharing tour

AKRON, Pa.—A group of Indonesian Mennonites has completed its month-long tour across four states and one province, sharing the good news in their own native style—and learning a little bit along the way as well.

Sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the Indonesian Cultural Team presented more than 40 programs to Mennonite congregations and institutions in Kansas, South Dakota, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Manitoba. The 16-member team includes church leaders, business people, university students and teachers from Indonesian Mennonite churches. Wearing brightly colored sarongs and headdresses that represent various provinces in Indonesia, they shared programs of traditional dance, songs and tight acappella harmonies.

Though the group's medium may be unique to Westerners, team member Julius Rampen says it helps "communicate the gospel to our own culture in our own language."

Indonesian Mennonites number 63,000, the third-largest Mennonite group outside North America. Yet they represent a tiny minority among their predominantly Muslim neighbors. By embracing their own Asian culture, Indonesian Mennonites hope to show that "Christianity is not just for Westerners—it is for all nations," says team member Andreas Christanday.

The trip produced various highlights for the Indonesian visitors. Getting to touch, see and taste snow for the first time was a new experience for these equatorial islanders.

They also say they witnessed a new way to express their faith. "We have learned from you a holistic approach," Christanday says, noting "quiltings, Ten Thousand Villages, canning, Youth Discovery Teams and thrift stores." Several team members say they plan to start a thrift store patterned after ones visited in North America.

But the Indonesians are returning home to a different situation than the one they left in mid-February. Since leaving Indonesia, a new vice president has threatened to close Christian churches, heightening an already tenuous situation. In the past two years, more than 100 churches have been burned, including a Mennonite church last November. Indonesian Mennonite leaders recently predicted the situation will worsen.

But Paul Gunawan, borrowing a phrase from a song the group sings, says, "God will make a way in difficult days."

The team plans to continue singing in Indonesia and will present a program at a celebration of MCC's 50 years in that country. The group also hopes to travel to China and Mongolia.—*Delphine Martin of MCC News Service*

We have learned from you a holistic approach: quiltings, Ten Thousand Villages, canning, Youth Discovery Teams and thrift stores.—*Andreas Christanday*

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First Giving Project Gathering holds pleasant surprises as participants address stewardship

SARASOTA, Fla.—Hands raised to heaven in prayer. A service of anointing. Is this an evangelistic meeting? A renewal movement?

How about a weekend event on money?

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church was the site of the first Giving Project Gathering Feb. 27-28. Similar events are planned through May for six other locations across North America.

The Giving Project is a five-year, inter-Mennonite project to develop clear thinking and Christian faithfulness in the use of financial and other resources. Its sponsoring agencies include the Division of General Services of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and Mennonite Mutual Aid.

None of the estimated 50 participants were sure what to expect from the first gathering.

"I dutifully attended what I thought was a workshop on money and found it wasn't about money but about all aspects of my life," said Virginia Christophel from Sarasota, Fla. "Imagine being inspired about money."

Said Raymond Martin, conference minister for Southeast Conference: "I believe these [gatherings] hold the potential to renew the church. We need to keep going what happened here so that God continues to renew us."

The diversity of the participants was another pleasant surprise. People came from African-American, Anglo, Haitian and Hispanic congregations throughout Florida.

"Surely among all our diversity in the church, there is a common concern," said Suzanne Kennedy from Harrisonburg, Va. "Wouldn't it be just like the Lord to use this to draw us together in a new way?"

In addition to worship, the weekend included three "tracks," designed to be places to talk about stewardship and renewal in the church. Each participant chose one track for the entire weekend, totaling seven and a half hours of workshop time. Topics were "Preaching/Teaching about Money," "Dedication of Offerings" and "Mercy Ministry."

"I learned how important it is to share your money story, not only with the extended church family, but with my family at home," said Irene Moore of Tampa, Fla., who participated in the "Preaching/Teaching about Money" track. "And I learned not to be afraid of giving liberally but to use God's wisdom in this area of my life."—*GCMC News Service*

The Giving Project has scheduled seven Giving Project Gatherings throughout the United States and Canada. In addition to the Sarasota, Fla., gathering Feb. 27-28, another weekend session was held in Wichita, Kan., April 3-4. Upcoming gatherings are:

- South Bend, Ind., April 3-4
- Perkasie, Pa., April 17-18
- Winnipeg, April 24-25
- Fresno, Calif., May 1-2
- Abbotsford, B.C., May 15-16.

EMM president to urban leaders: Forgive us

PHILADELPHIA—A March 5 prayer breakfast of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) staff and executive committee members with about 30 Philadelphia-area urban Mennonite congregational leaders spontaneously turned into a time of repentance and healing of past hurts.

During the meeting, held at Diamond Street Mennonite Church, EMM president Richard Showalter heard complaints from several urban church leaders. Showalter asked forgiveness from them "for those ways we have viewed you as wild olive branches grafted into the mainstream of the Mennonite Church."

"We have sinned against you by not carrying the kind of trust we should have toward you," he said. "You don't come to us empty-handed, and we know that, but we have been slow to accept the gifts you have brought to us.... We'd like to break that pattern, to acknowledge our failure and to ask you to forgive us."

All EMM executive committee and staff members present stood with Showalter to show affirmation of his statement.

Earlier that morning, Charles Bulford, co-pastor of New Mercies Mennonite Church, gave a devotional including Luke 5, where men broke through a roof to lower their paralyzed friend to Jesus.

"The very nature of our [urban] ministries is uncoventional," Bulford said. "We're coming through the roof. And one day we will write your history because there will be more of us than there are of you.

"But things have happened over the course of our history which have been millstones around our necks. It's a new day. We need to hear that our sins are forgiven."

After Showalter's apology, the urban leaders stood to acknowledge their forgiveness and, in turn, ask EMM leaders for forgiveness.

"Culture many times causes us to view each other in ways that are not godly," said Diamond Street pastor Otis Banks.—*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

> We have sinned against you by not carrying the kind of trust we should have toward you.
>
> —*Richard Showalter*

Driving west on Easter

by Jeff Gundy

Illustration by Lora Jost

1.

What does it take to make the trip? I'd be happy for a sign, a note, the voice of God. The sign I have says Route 30, Buettner Road. On a white barn shadow cutouts: waving man and woman, jumping dog, cheerful as television. Three thin girls in Wolcott, walking, smoking, smiling. Me in my white car, unobserved, wanting every leaf to be a bird, every bird an angel. Something in the ditch—a dingy paper, filled with wind.

2.

A man needs to dream, even if it's hard as passing on Route 24, risky as writing in this notebook propped on the steering wheel, the jerk of adrenaline as tons of metal loom inches from my cherished flesh. Stupid, I know, but what would you do, the absolute quick hum leaks in at every seam, the final whisper drums in the winds of passage, the engine murmurs now, now. On the overpass: I love you Jeff. Just like that.

3.

South of Gridley, a quarter-section remnant of prairie, charred yesterday by a sweaty white-haired man whose picture made the paper, dragging a fire broom, spreading flames, hurrying carefully, explaining the centuries of practice on his side. I love that picture, I want to drag a fire broom over my prairies, run beside the clean flames, watch the dainty shoots sniff into the sunlight. But here the smoke has cleared, it's a blue still Easter in the Mackinaw Breaks, yellow branches, red branches, making their beautiful empty moves.

4.

Two hours 46 minutes to St. Louis, the bridge over the strong brown god. I sweep down a long hill into the Loutre River valley, buds swelling, nets of yellow, green, red, caught in the small trees. How big the world is. How hard to keep it in my head.

5.

And I know what binds me, sends me cruising toward Emporia on new blacktop, the swerves and maneuvers that have me driving west on Easter. No simple life. No blazing sign. Moments when the traffic thins, the road arrows to the west, the sun makes another run on the warm skin of the world. These words, just rehearsals for the great day when the glowing vowels will stretch from cup to wine, from chapter to verse, all along the roaring stone and flesh and wind and fire that is me and you and the Mongol hordes and the secret lives in the Marianas Trench, the world that climbs and spins in the Kansas evening, calm and still and moving as Easter in a car alone, six hundred miles behind me and a dozen to go, twelve miles to Newton and the house of the stranger who asked me to come, so far, so good, where the guest room is ready when I knock on the door.

Jeff Gundy teaches English at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

Empty and Easter

Easter is an ongoing reality that happens whenever trust wins out over suspicion, whenever kindness pushes meanness aside, whenever goodness overcomes evil.

by Kenneth L. Gibble

Has it ever happened to you? You're driving along—on the interstate, let's say—and you happen to glance down at the fuel gauge. And you are shocked to see the needle pointing all the way to the left, directly over the big red E.

Empty. It's one of those words in the English language that almost always has negative connotations.

Picture a village in the Sudan. The land surrounding it is barren. We have been told that a vicious combination of drought and warfare has devastated the region. As we enter the village, we notice people, women and children mostly, who stand or sit listlessly outside the crude buildings that serve as their homes. Many of them face starvation. There hasn't been enough food. Their stomachs are empty.

Picture another place, a large city in our own land. It is nighttime and the streets and sidewalks are empty. Why empty? Because in this part of the city it is dangerous to be out after dark. Fear stalks alleyways and street corners. The threat of violence keeps people inside, cut off from the human interchange so necessary for a healthy community. Empty streets mean all is not well.

Blank pages: There are many kinds of emptiness in our world. A once-thriving steel plant stands empty in a Pennsylvania town. A vacant chair at a family's Easter Sunday dinner gives mute testimony to the absence of a loved one who always sat there. A calendar with blank pages hangs on the wall of the room in a nursing home, a calendar that used to be filled with engagements and appointments before the man who now lies on the bed suffered his unexpected stroke.

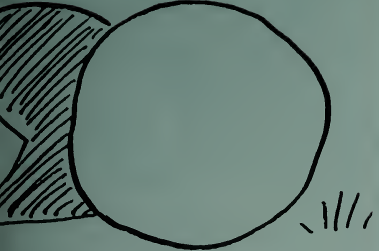
Nobody likes the feelings of empty, whether it is parents experiencing the "empty nest," wage earners who contemplate empty wallets or pastors who look out on empty pews in the church.

To be human is to experience feelings of emptiness. When hearts are empty, life hardly seems worth living.

How ironic, then, that for Christians who celebrate Easter joy, gladness centers on something empty: a tomb.

John's Gospel says that Mary Magdalene's first reaction, when she saw the stone rolled away from the tomb's entrance, was one of distress. Tomb robbing was not unheard of in that time. A Roman law dealt with the crime. Mary, when she saw the stone had been removed, ran to find Peter and the beloved disciple. She exclaimed, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him."

What else was she to think? Surely nothing so unthinkable and so wonderful as resurrection. Only that the dead body of the one she loved had been stolen. And when the two disciples entered the tomb and found it empty, the Gospel tells us they "believed." Believed what? That he was risen, or merely that what Mary had told them was true, that his body was missing?



From Today's English Version published by the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023. Copyright 1966

An empty tomb alone is not cause for joy. Joy doesn't happen until the Risen Lord is met, until resurrection is confirmed by one word spoken to the woman who weeps for him. "Mary!" he says, and suddenly, for Mary, the empty tomb is transformed from a symbol of despair into a symbol of the joy of all joys.

And this is still true, that Easter depends on what we allow it to do to us and for us. For some, perhaps even for most, Easter is simply a pleasant rite of spring, a happy milestone on the journey from wearisome winter to the warm days and emerging greenery of April and May. And that is enough.

For some.

But for others, Easter is more, much more. It means a promise that emptiness is not the condition for which they are made. It means an invitation to hold up their empty cups to the Lord of life so they can be filled. It means that an empty tomb outside Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago still symbolizes the final victory that God will win over every evil, every emptiness that plagues the human family. It means an assurance that death does not have the final word.

Ongoing reality: Easter is not just one day out of each year. It is not even just the best day out of each year. Easter is an ongoing reality that happens whenever trust wins out over suspicion, whenever kindness pushes meanness aside, whenever goodness overcomes evil. Easter happens whenever empty hearts hear the Christ say, "I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness" (John 10:10 TEV).

Because the tomb was empty, Easter is an answer to every emptiness you and I may encounter.

In one of his poems, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote this of the Risen Christ: "Let him easter in us."

Easter is a verb. How absolutely right that is.

Yes, let him easter in us, the Christ who is risen. He is risen indeed!

And so, by God's grace, are we.

Kenneth L. Gibble lives in Arlington, Va.

a communion of beans and rice

by Sally Jacober

Once more today, for the thousandth time, I prepared beans and rice for two of the wonderful women with whom I work in New Orleans. And once again, my mind and my heart were flooded with memories, memories of how I knew Jesus, over and over again, as Brazilian women shared their beans and rice with me.

As Dona Josefa, or Dona Luiza, or Dona Veronica shared what they had, they began by saying, "Desculpe a comida pobre e humilde." ("Forgive the humble food.") The richness for me, along with the delicious food, came in their love, their affection, their encouragement and their support poured out freely. All this for me, who had come as a stranger to their community.

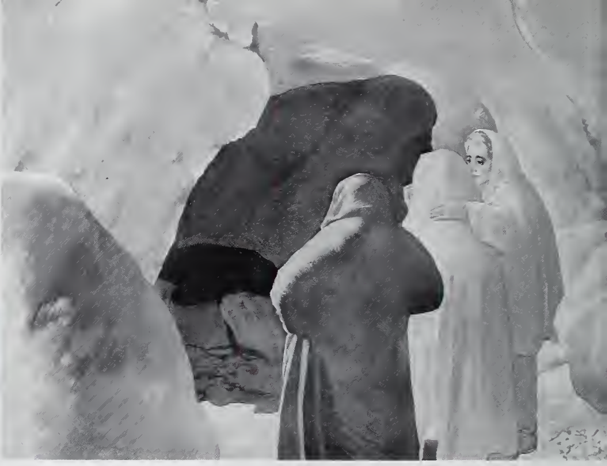
As I chopped peppers, onion and garlic this morning, and as I sorted the beans, looking for small stones and other imperfections, I felt the godly presence and strength of these women with me. And I knew again how pleased they would be, that although I no longer live among them, I still seek to share the presence of that same Jesus as I share with other people in another place the same beans and rice. Truly I knew Jesus, and continue to know him, in the breaking of the bread.

Sally Jacober directs the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. program in New Orleans. She is from San Francisco and is a member of First Mennonite Church, San Francisco.

He had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

—Luke 24:35

Do not hold me



For Mary, Easter was a complete surprise. It had no more precedent then than it does now. Easter cannot be predicted, managed or deserved.

by David A. Stevens

For Mary, the worst news imaginable had come on Friday. A humiliating death had ended Jesus and his dream and, it would appear, his movement. Mary must have felt a numbness, a wave of nausea, a feeling between being beaten up and floating away. It was over. For Mary, Sunday felt like Friday had felt.

Mary's Easter Sunday experience was completely different from ours. Easter was not on Mary's calendar. She had no expectation of what happened. She had not read ahead in the New Testament. According to John 20:9, "As yet they did not understand ...that he must rise from the dead." To those closest to Jesus, he was dead and gone.

It is the hardest part of faith for disciples to learn: to let Jesus be Jesus. We come to know Jesus most clearly when we stop holding him to who we want him to be.

Yet in other ways those first disciples were like us. None saw the resurrection. A few saw an empty tomb, but few experienced an appearance. Like us, they saw evidence, not resurrection. Not only that, but they saw ambiguous evidence: an empty grave, empty grave clothes. Mary thought of grave robbers. We are not told what it meant to Peter. The beloved disciple sees and believes. The same evidence led to different conclusions even among those closest to Jesus. It still does.

John's Gospel invites us away from an expected Easter, away from our preconceptions about Jesus' resurrection, whether of certitude or doubt. Instead we are invited to examine the same ambiguous evidence the way the first witnesses had to. We are invited to share their confusion, candor and conclusions about an unexpected event. Such an invitation leaves open the possibility that we may not believe. So be it. Let's step into the sandals and feelings of Mary. What can her experience teach us about faith?

Early in the morning, Mary comes to the tomb. She comes alone. She sees the stone removed. Then without looking into the tomb, she draws the conclusion that the body is missing. Later, Mary, through her tears, bends down to look into the tomb. She sees two angels. They give no answers, only a question, "Why are you crying?" Mary answers, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Mary turns and sees a man she believes is on the cemetery committee. He's taking care of the grounds. Today, he'd have a bandana, a Grateful Dead T-shirt and a weedwacker.

But it's not the gardener. It's Jesus. Now maybe it's Mary's grief or her determination to solve this problem singlehandedly. But she doesn't recognize Jesus. She's not looking for him. She's looking for a corpse.

The first messenger: Jesus calls her name, and she knows. All at once, Friday is over. For the first time it's Easter, and nothing will ever be the same again. Mary receives the first appearance of the risen Jesus. Mary becomes the first messenger of the good news.

What can we learn about faith from Mary? On that Sunday morning, she was not out looking for a miracle. The empty tomb did not even hint at resurrection for her. It only saddened her with the assumption that Jesus' body had been stolen. But Mary comes to faith through the word of Christ, the Christ who calls her name. For the Good Shepherd knows his own and calls each of them by name.

When Mary recognizes the new life of Christ, she becomes a participant in that new life. Mary now proclaims the Christ who called her by name.

When Mary said, "Teacher!" Jesus said, "Do not hold me." For Mary, Jesus is back. But Jesus says he must ascend. Resurrection is not the good news that Jesus is back but that he is ascended. To try to hold on to Jesus separates us from Jesus. He said, "It is to your advantage that I return to the Father, so that the Helper, the Holy Spirit might come."

To hold on to something is to control, to own, to define, to manipulate, to manage, to co-opt for one's own agenda. Mary wanted to take control and return things to "normal." When Jesus called, "Mary!" she responded, "Teacher!" thinking the old relationship had been restored. In her understandable joy she wanted to embrace Jesus—as any of us would a friend who has come back again. But the embrace meant confinement. And all things have become new.

The ministry of the historical Jesus is over; now begins the ministry of the glorified and ascended Christ. Mary and the disciples and the church today are not to hold things the way they were. Just as death cannot hold Jesus, so his followers can't hold him.

Born from above: What can we do with Easter? We cannot hold it, but we can allow ourselves to be launched from it. What stays after the resurrection is not Jesus but his word. And we are to trust his word. Easter faith is trusting the Jesus who will be his own kind of Christ. We can know him and proclaim him but never hold him. It is the hardest part of faith for disciples to learn: to let Jesus be Jesus. We come to know Jesus most clearly when we stop holding him to whom we want him to be. That's when we are born from above.

John's Gospel does not invite us to be triumphalistic about a victory over death that was "in the bag." John woos us to be perplexed, amazed and finally called by name. The gospel invites our commitment to the great resurrection mystery that both the Scriptures and we proclaim but can never fully understand. For Mary, Easter was a complete surprise. It had no more precedent then than it does now. Easter cannot be predicted, managed or deserved.

The paramount question is this: Can we stake our life on an Easter that cannot be held? The Scripture says, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name."

David A. Stevens is associate pastor at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church. He thanks New Testament scholar Gail R. O'Day for her help in exegesis of the text.

A Lakota trickster

by Sue Eagle

SuAnne Big Crow worked for justice in her brief life. She was a Trickster in the Lakota Nation, using seemingly absurd methods to seek justice. An excellent basketball player and an honor student, SuAnne confronted alcohol abuse among her peers, assisted with education about HIV and worked against racism. She dreamed of building a safe, fun place for children and teens—a "Happy Town" without racism, drugs or violence.

Then a car accident in 1992 claimed SuAnne Big Crow's life as she was on her way to a state sports banquet, where she had been nominated for an award. A high school senior, she was only 17.

The following is one of many stories in SuAnne's life that illustrate her role as a modern-day Lakota Trickster.

SuAnne and her basketball team were scheduled to play in a town known for its prejudice against Native people. Deciding to lead her team's warm-up, SuAnne advised them not to worry, to just follow her. As she ran onto the court with her team behind her, home-team fans taunted them with mocking war whoops and imitations of drumming. SuAnne stopped short, her teammates stumbling into each other in bewilderment. Taking off her warm-up jacket and wrapping it around her shoulders like a shawl, SuAnne started fancy-dancing across the gymnasium floor. The audience hushed, not knowing quite what to make of this young woman proudly displaying her Native culture.

SuAnne's spirit is still at work on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Her stories continue to give wisdom to those willing to listen. And the SuAnne Big Crow Boys and Girls Club of America, established in her memory, has a recreation center with a restaurant called "Happy Town." The club is a place where reconciliation is the goal and respect is the rule.

Sue Eagle and her husband, Harley (at right), serve as recreation leaders at the SuAnne Big Crow Boys and Girls Club. Sue and Harley are from Port Hardy, B.C., and are members of Port Hardy Mennonite Fellowship.

Trickster stories are considered sacred messages—spiritual stories given by the Creator—in aboriginal cultures. They may be compared to the holy words given the Jews and Christians by God through the Bible.

Jesus played the Trickster while he was here on earth—he was God's fool. Coming to transform the world's structures and to lay the foundations of a peaceable kingdom, he used methods that seemed absurd to the society where God placed him. Jesus was Almighty God in the humble form of an itinerant peasant, eventually mocked and ridiculed.

Jesus faced a horrible death on the cross when he could have chosen to use God's power to flee the pain and terror. He had human emotions and was probably tempted to use violence to deal with the wrongs he witnessed. In Christ's short but full life, he worked for justice using nonviolence, love and compassion, and he asks us to do the same.

—Sue Eagle

MCC photo by Howard Zehr

Beginnings
a tM serie

The story tha
had to be tol

Jesus turned a trap into a lesson about self-righteousness.

by Ryan Ahlgrim

> Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him.
>
> Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."
>
> —*John 8:2-11 (NRSV)*

John did not write the story at left. The story does not appear in any of the earliest manuscripts of the Gospel of John. Those manuscripts that do include the story put it in different places in the Gospel of John. Some even put it in the Gospel of Luke. The story was added to the Gospel of John at least 100 years after John was written.

But the story was so good it had to be told. The early church passed it down from generation to generation, and to make sure it would never be forgotten, the early church eventually inserted it into the Gospel of John.

The story continues to be popular today. But have we become so familiar with it that we no longer hear its stinging yet healing message? The story begins with Jesus teaching in the temple, surrounded by enthusiastic listeners. Suddenly some religious leaders push their way through the crowd, dragging a woman behind them. They thrust her forward and say, "This woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. The law of Moses commands us to stone such women. What do you say?" Deuteronomy 22:22 says, "If a man is caught lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman as well as the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel."

Only the woman is brought before Jesus. Where's the man? Presumably he escaped. But the sacred law of Moses is clear: This woman must be executed. But why do the religious leaders want a response from Jesus? To trap him. They believe he will say something about this situatiion that will get him into trouble.

It is well known that Jesus goes out of his way to befriend the most obvious sinners—people with sinful occupations such as tax collecting and prostitution. Instead of punishing them, he eats with them, accepts bread from their hands and drinks with them. Jesus has a shocking reputation for being soft on sinners. This does not mean he is soft on sin. Everyone knows he is hard on sin. Many of his teachings are even stricter than the laws of Moses. The religious leaders expect Jesus to say something like, "Yes, adultery is a terrible sin, but execution is too harsh. Just give her a good talking to." If he does, they can charge him with disagreeing with the clear law of Moses. And if he says, "If Moses says to execute her, then execute her," then Jesus will be violating his practice and will lose friends among the sinners.

It is a no-win situation, and Jesus knows it. That is why he bends down and writes in the dirt: he has no answer. Some have imagined Jesus was writing the sins of the accusers, but it is more likely he was simply trying to ignore their question. Today a politician would say, "No comment." The religious leaders know they have him trapped. No answer is as good as an incriminating answer as long as they can make Jesus look bad. They keep pushing for an answer to their no-win question, thereby humiliating Jesus: "Come on, Jesus! What do you say? Is Moses right or wrong? Come on, answer!" But while Jesus has been writing in the dirt, he has had time to think. Pushed for an answer, he straightens up and makes one of the most profound statements of his ministry: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

Self-righteousness: Jesus is not against the law of Moses. He is not against calling sin a sin. He is not against discipline. He is not even against punishment. But he is against the spiritual starting point of the people facing him. He is against self-righteousness. He is against anyone thinking they are morally or spiritually superior to anyone else. It is as if Jesus were saying to the religious leaders: "If your starting assumption is that you are better than this woman, then you may not carry out the law of Moses."

Self-righteousness has always been one of my biggest struggles. I managed to avoid many of the standard sins of the teenage and young adult years: I never smoked a cigarette or used an illegal drug or got drunk or had premarital intercourse. Because of these and other "accomplishments," I often thought I was morally better than those who had not avoided these sins. My pride, particularly during my teen years, made me arrogant, aloof and judgmental. I mentally put myself on a pillar.

But I discovered a pillar is a bad place to stand, because you stand alone; even God does not stand with you when you are on a pillar. The summer before I went to college, I was working at a pizzeria. One day a co-worker asked me, "Ryan, do you think I'm going to hell?" I did not like this fellow, and he knew it. He was always shifting the blame for his mistakes to others and acted like a brat. In addition, he made no claim to being a Christian. So I said to him, "I don't decide that—God does. But in my opinion, yes, you're going to hell."

I have said many stupid things in my life, and as a preacher I have had more opportunity than most to say stupid things, but I think that was one of the worst things I have ever said. Who am I to give a judgment about another person's ultimate destiny with God? Who am I to think I'm better than he is—that I should be in and he should be out? I wish I had said something like this to him instead: "I don't know if you're going to hell. All I know is that I am in constant danger of spiritually destroying myself. All I can do is come before God in utter humility and live by God's grace alone."

It took a roommate of mine in college to first show me clearly what an arrogant fool I had become. I remember the day I let go of my righteousness and accomplishments and stepped off my pillar. I remember the joy of joining the rest of humanity, realizing we are all in the same boat. It was so wonderful to laugh at myself and let go of my heavy pride that I thought I would float away.

G.K. Chesterton once wrote, "Angels can fly because they take themselves so lightly."

When Jesus says, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her," he bends down and doodles again in the dirt. Rather than staring at them in accusation, he gently gives them time to think about it. The elders leave first. Wisdom eventually teaches us that the stone we throw at another ultimately comes back to hit us. The insult we inflict on another is ultimately inflicted on us. The judgment we give is the judgment we receive. After all have gone, then Jesus addresses the woman: "Has no one condemned you?" Cautiously she answers, "No one, sir." Then Jesus passes his own judgment on her: "Neither do I condemn you."

Imagine that. If anyone could legitimately condemn her, he could. But he does not. She has committed a serious sin, breaking one of the Ten Commandments. She has expressed no remorse, no repentance, yet Jesus drops the charges and the punishment. In effect, Jesus is saying to her, "I accept you as you are." Then, and only then, does he say, "Go your way and from now on do not sin again."

Should sin be confronted? Of course. That is how we mature. But Jesus makes it clear that before sin can be confronted, the sinner must be loved and treated as an absolute equal with ourselves. When love is given first, with no strings attached, we are empowered to change.

When love is given first, with no strings attached, we are empowered to change.

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

According to legend, based on truth, during the days of the early church a man known as Abba Abraham decided to leave the evil influences of the world and live as a hermit in the desert. Others followed him there, and he began a community of monks devoted to strict spiritual disciplines. When his brother died, Abraham's little niece, Mary, was sent to live with him in the desert. He taught her the spiritual disciplines as she grew to become a young woman, and she joined the monks in their rigorous life.

One day a new monk came to the community. He went for a walk with Mary, and their passions got the better of them. Mary was so ashamed at what happened she could no longer face her uncle, so she ran away. When Abba Abraham learned what had happened, he prayed about it and decided to leave the community and find Mary. For two years he went from town to town searching for Mary. Finally he found her. But he was devastated to discover she had become a prostitute.

He bought clothes to look like a soldier, then went to the brothel and asked to see Mary. The owner pointed out her room. Mary had stopped looking into the faces of her customers. But as she undid his sandals, Abraham said, "I've come a long way for the love of Mary."

Mary looked up at her uncle, and they cried. Mary returned to the desert community with him and became renowned for her spiritual sensitivity and understanding. Today, in the Roman Catholic Church, she is known as Saint Mary the Harlot.—*Ryan Ahlgrim*

Ex-college controller sentenced for embezzling

NEWTON, Kan.—Michael Lichtenberger, the former Bethel College controller found guilty of embezzling $1.3 million from the North Newton, Kan., school, has been sentenced to 52 months in prison for the crimes. Lichtenberger, who was Bethel's controller from 1990 to 1997, was also ordered to repay the money to the college.

The sentence, handed down in district court on March 18, is twice that recommended by state guidelines. In a January plea bargain, Lichtenberger pled guilty to four forgery counts and three theft counts.

During the sentencing hearing, Lichtenberger's wife, Janie Shearion, described the couple's lifestyle, based on what she said she thought were her husband's inheritance and good investments. Under a prenuptial agreement, Lichtenberger provided Shearion with $3,500 a month—or some $4,000 more per year than his $38,000 college salary. Lichtenberger's gifts to his wife also included a $97,000 home, a $44,000 BMW and an $11,000 wedding and engagement ring set.

Lichtenberger still faces federal charges related to the embezzlement.—*Newton Kansan*

Larry Bartel

Stitchin' time

Hesston (Kan.) College freshmen Marlene Whitmer (left) of Plain City, Ohio, and Nicole Cook of Pleasant Dale, Neb., contribute a few stitches to a quilt to be donated to the Mid-Kansas Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale quilt auction, to be held April 18 in Hutchinson. More than 125 Hesston students, faculty, staff and campus guests have sewed on the project since it started in January.

Pennsylvania church withdraws GC membership

NEWTON, Kan.—Citing theological concerns, Pine Grove Mennonite Church of Bowmansville, Pa., has withdrawn from the General Conference Mennonite Church. According to a Jan. 31 letter from pastor Jahn Horgen to GC general secretary James Schrag, 96 percent of Pine Grove members voted to withdraw at the congregation's annual meeting Jan. 24.

The list of concerns in Horgen's letter included disagreements with the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective,* "tolerance [of homosexuality] . . . along with the desire to constantly dialogue" and questions about "the direction that our seminaries have taken."

Pine Grove, a congregation of 218 members, remains a member of the Eastern District Conference. GC polity allows a congregation to be a member of an area conference without being a member of the larger denomination. —*GCMC News Service*

MCC, MEDA join for China poverty project

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Economic Development Associates are joining with Canadian and Chinese partners to provide $8 million for development assistance to four provinces in China's interior with high poverty needs.

The project will focus on sustainable agriculture and marketing, nutrition, basic education and economic diversification. The project will also pay particular attention to the needs of women as investigators have found that women suffer disproportionately from poverty.

Also participating in the initiative are the Canadian International Development Agency and the Amity Foundation, a Chinese Christian organization.—*MEDA News Service*

Festival's ethnic food goes for larger market

FREEMAN, S.D.—For 40 years, Schmeckfest has provided visitors the chance to sample ethnic Mennonite food—but only if the visitors came to Freeman when the annual "tasting festival" was held each spring.

But now some of the food of Schmeckfest is available via mail-order catalog and in some stores. The enterprise, called Taste of Schmeckfest, offers homemade noodle soup, poppyseed cake with caramel frosting and peppernuts. Some crafts are also available.

Schmeckfest is an annual benefit for Freeman Academy, a Mennonite-affiliated junior high and high school. The event was held this year on March 19-21.—*Freeman Courier*

MMA assets reach $1 billion mark

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) reached a milestone last month when its assets topped $1 billion, continuing a decade-long trend of increases.

More than half the funds are in retirement and other investment accounts, such as annuities, mutual funds and capital management accounts. Almost a third of the funds are in Mennonite Foundation, which includes contributions to be distributed as well as funds managed for institutions.

MMA's assets in 1989 were $240 million, increasing to $480 million in 1993.—*MMA News Service*

Insurance company reports strong year

NEW HOLLAND, Pa.—One year after merging with three smaller insurance companies, Goodville Mutual Casualty Company reported a 17 percent growth in equity. Goodville merged with Franconia Mennonite Aid Plan, Mennonite Mutual Insurance Association and Tri-County Mennonite Mutual Insurance Co.

President Herman Bontrager credited loyal policyholders for the success. "Merger is a time when policyholders are more likely to shop around. Ours stayed," he says.

Bontrager also cited mild weather, leading to fewer losses in 1997. Goodville paid almost 4,300 claims last year.

Goodville last year also made more than $39,000 in charitable contributions, the largest going to Mennonite Central Committee for overseas microenterprise development. Other recipients were Mennonite schools, Christian Aid Ministries, Habitat for Humanity and Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

Philadelphia churches hold memorial service

PHILADELPHIA—Area Mennonites were among some 200 whites, African-Americans and Filipinos who gathered for a March 8 memorial service for two slain Filipino women. Maria Cabuenos and Calma Calida were killed a year ago in a murder considered racially motivated.

Kapitaran Christian Church, an Eastern Mennonite Missions church plant among Filipinos, canceled its usual 3 p.m. worship service to join the memorial service. Pastor Ton Alcantara told the gathering that it is "a time to heal, … a time to love, … a time to mend, … a time to remember so we can move on to the future."

Diamond Street Mennonite Church pastor Otis Banks, speaking on behalf of the African-American community, said, "As members of a minority community, we share a commonality of suffering that makes us brothers and sisters." But he acknowledged that sometimes "brothers and sisters are at odds with each other."—*EMM News Service*

Bluffton student wins $10,000 for essay

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton College junior Marina Aleixo won first prize and $10,000 in the Today & Tomorrow Scholarship Essay Competition organized by the World of Knowledge Foundation. Aleixo, a native of Brazil, compared life in her homeland and in the United States.

The World of Knowledge Foundation funds educational programs for immigrant families and foreign students in the United States.

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Events

Michiana chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates meeting, April 16, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Speaker: Timothy Smith. Contact: Michiana MEDA, 219-537-4334.

Pastors Conference, May 6-7, Goshen (Ind.) College. Topic: "Salvation: God's Grace in Human Experience" Keynote speaker: Art McPhee. Contact: Sheldon Burkhalter, 219-535-7536 or sheldonwb@goshen.edu.

Ridgeway Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebration, May 17, Harrisonburg, Va. Contact: Ruby McDorman, 540-234-8350.

Correction: The Giving Project Gathering, April 17-18, Deep Run East Mennonite Church, Perkasie, Pa. Contact: 219-296-6236, GivingProject@Prodigy.net.

Workers

Brodhagen, Stan began as General Conference Mennonite Church director of development March 2.

Hochstetler, Ritch has been named youth minister for the Western District and South Central conferences, effective June 1.

Keller, Frank has joined the General Conference Mennonite Church development staff.

Kreider, Andrew was installed as pastor of Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., on March 27.

Slagel, Steve was installed as pastoral team leader of East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church on March 8.

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Births

Appelhans, Adriana Paul, Katherine Maria and Lauren Elizabeth (triplets), Feb. 18, to Paul and Vicki (Smith) Appelhans, Greeley, Colo.

Bontrager, Abigail Christine, Feb. 10, to Shelley (Martin) and Wendell Bontrager, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Bontrager, Elijah Truth, Jan. 15, to Deborah (Sharp) and Kenton Bontrager, Westbrookville, N.Y.

Bowers, Lena Rose and Stella Grace (twins), Feb. 9, to Bruce and Sylvia (Bonebrake) Bowers, Meridian, Idaho.

Burkhart, Anna Gabrielle, Feb. 26, to Dan and Gina (Oberholtzer) Burkhart, Manheim, Pa.

Crouse, Katharine Ryan, Feb. 13, to Patrick and Wendy (Moser) Crouse, Annapolis, Md.

Dick, Camryn Bailey, Feb. 22, to Corey and Stacy (Kroeker) Dick, Henderson, Neb.

Earnest, Tabor Philip, Feb. 22, to Beth (Stockton) and Scott Earnest, Nampa, Idaho.

Eash, Zachary Alexander, Jan. 17, to David and Janine (Carman) Eash, Benson, N.C.

Epp, Naomi Elizabeth Neufeld, Feb. 28, to Jerry and Kristin (Neufeld) Epp, Newton, Kan.

Hilton-Nickel, Emily Selma, Feb. 7, to Alan and Darlene Hilton-Nickel, Santa Clara, Calif.

Hostetler, Caden Michael, Feb. 5, to Dana and Troy Hostetler, Hutchinson, Kan.

Hurst, Cody Brendon, Feb. 20, to Chad and Coleen (Rohrer) Hurst, Manheim, Pa.

Keeler, Isabella Nicole, March 1, to Milly (Brenner) and Scott Keeler, Corry, Pa.

Lugbill, Anna Lynne, Jan. 23, to Ron and Teri (Miller) Lugbill, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Mast, Madeline Hope, Feb. 11, to Dean and Jan (Steffy) Mast, Lancaster, Pa.

Peltier, Steven Andres, Jan. 20, to Steven and Susan (Schaefer) Peltier, Phoenix.

Reimer, Isaiah Yantzi, March 1, to John Reimer and Lorie Yantzi, Petitcodiac, N.B.

Rittenhouse, Matthew Alan, Feb. 23, to Jonathan and Vicky (Maus) Rittenhouse, Harrisonburg, Va.

Sauder, Andrew Isaac, Feb. 24, to Dan and Esmerelda (Avina) Sauder, Wauseon, Ohio.

Smith, Bethany Grace, Feb. 2, to Benjamin and Grace (Eldredge) Smith, Lititz, Pa.

Steinmann, Cody Daniel, Feb. 28, to Alyce and Todd Steinmann, Tavistock, Ont.

Tribble, Alexandra Nichole, Feb. 26, to Laura (Lothamer) and Richard Tribble III, LaGrange, Ind.

Marriages

Derstein/Moyer: Nicole Derstein, Ford, Kan., and Rick Moyer, Ford, Feb. 7, by Jeffrey Blackburn.

Friesen/Parks: Joanna Friesen, Bluffton, Ohio, and Stephen Parks, Lansing, Kan., Dec. 27, by Darrell Fast.

Kilmer/Nussbaum: Veronica Kilmer, Orrville, Ohio, and Matthew Nussbaum, Dalton, Ohio, March 7, by Terry Shue.

Deaths

Bacon, Wendell, 72, York, Pa., died Oct. 2. Survivors: wife, E. Jean; daughter, Sherilyn Poet; four grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 6 at York by Warren Tyson.

Bergey, Wilmer L., 97, Souderton, Pa., died March 10. Survivors: children Emma Keeler, Eva Nyce, Elva Hange; 21 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; 33 great-great-grandchildren. Burial: March 14 at Franconia, Pa., by Steven Landis, Curtis Bergey and Steve Nyce.

Blough, Alvin John, 80, Hesston, Kan., died March 4 of Alzheimer's disease. Survivors: wife, Gertrude; children John, Jim, Jerry, Jay, Joe, Judy Smith, Joyce McLear, Julia Rodgers; 18 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren. Burial: March 7 at Hesston by Cheryl Hershberger and Steve Nyce.

Boehr, Elmer, 89, Henderson, Neb., died March 8. Survivors: wife, Frieda; children Elmiran, Ron, Carol Ott; five grandchildren. Burial: March 12 at Henderson by John Yoder-Schrock.

Bontrager, William R., 92, Hesston, Kan., died March 11. Survivors: wife, Buetta; children Glenda Monteith, Miriam Ensz, Howard; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: March 14 at Inman, Kan., by Cheryl Hershberger and Ann Showalter.

Dagen, Robert, 71, Strasburg, Pa., died March 15. Survivors: wife, Rhoda; children Judith Witmer, Patsy Beiler, Charles; six grandchildren. Burial: March 19 at Lancaster, Pa., by Harold Shultz and Ira Kurtz.

Eshleman, Harold Grant, 86, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 27. Survivors: wife, Arlene; children Robert, Kenneth, Ruth Schrock; six grandchildren; two great-children. Burial: March 4 at Harrisonburg, Va., by Sam Janzen and Beryl Jantzi.

Flisher, Arvilla Ellen Miller, 72, Hannibal, Mo., died March 10. Survivors: husband, Jacob; children Mary Ina Hooley, Judith Ginger, Sylvia Blaser, Jeanette Hess; seven grandchildren. Burial: March 17 at Philadelphia, Mo., by William Clifton.

Gehman, Melvin, 83, Bally, Pa., died Feb. 7 of Alzheimer's disease. Survivors: wife, Sara; children David, Ruth Stauffer, Irene; four grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 12 at Bally by Roy Yoder and Doug Jantzi.

Herr, Anna M. Sangrey, 87, Millersville, Pa., died March 15. Survivors: children Kathryn Martin, Harold; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 18 at Pequea, Pa., by Delbert Kautz and Abram Charles.

Horst, Elva Conrad, 97, Smithville, Ohio, died Feb. 27of a stroke. Survivors: children George, Dale, Philip; 16 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 2 at Wooster, Ohio, by Richard Ross.

Landis, Ruth Fry Garman, 87, East Petersburg, Pa., died Feb. 28. Survivors: children Miriam Bauman, Ruth Lutz, Elizabeth Nissley, Rhoda Cicero, Mark, John, James; 23 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: March 4 at Landis Valley, Pa., by Thomas Horst, Paul Weaver, Donald Good and John Landis.

Lapham, William T. Jr., 62, York, Pa., died Dec. 21 of cancer. Survivor: wife, Shirley. Burial: Dec. 26 at York by Warren Tyson.

Lauver, Raymond, 80, Mifflintown, Pa., died March 5 of heart failure. Survivors: wife, Kathryn; children Judy Martin, Barbara Brubaker, Rachel Erb, Miriam, Lillian Weaver; 22 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 9 at Mifflintown by Gary Krabill.

Louden, James Wesley, 82, Selkirk, Ont., died Feb. 9. Survivors: wife, Eunice; children Harold, Bruce, Joseph; 14 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 13 at Selkirk by Catherine Hunsberger.

Martin, Elvina Martin, 83, St. Jacobs, Ont., died March 8. Survivors: husband, Menno; children Lena Roth, Verna Loewen; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: March 12 at St. Jacobs by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel and Anna Hemmendinger.

Miller, Mabel Helmuth, 93, Goshen, Ind., died March 10. Survivors: children Marilyn, Ned; 10 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 14 at Goshen by Robert Shreiner and Vernon Bontreger.

Miller, Paul M., 83, Lititz, Pa., died March 3. Survivors: wife, Bertha; children John, James, Rebecca Fast, Rosemary; six grandchildren. Burial: March 7 at Landisville, Pa., by Urbane Peachey and Dawn Yoder Harms.

Osborne, Chester C., 84, Hesston, Kan., died March 2. Survivors: wife, Eva; children Conrad, Zonda Befort, Philip, Rachel Koppenhaver, David, Stanley, Grace; 18 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: March 6 at Hesston by Cheryl Hershberger and Ann Showalter.

Overholt, Ralph O., 80, Fredericktown, Ohio, died Jan. 28. Survivors: children Richard, Edward, Joseph, Jay, David, Mark, Mary Ellen Hazen; 25 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Jan. 31 at Chesterville, Ohio, by Glenn Martin and Murray Krabill.

Regier, Edwin, 73, Halstead, Kan., died Feb. 11. Survivors: wife, Evelyn; children Dianna Harms, Duane; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 14 at Halstead by Cleo Koop.

Reichenbach, Shirley Staley, 69, Bluffton, Ohio, died March 14 of cancer. Survivors: husband, Kenneth; children Teresa Parlette, Diane, Keith; five grandchildren; parents, George and Edith Staley. Burial: March 16 at Bluffton by Dorothy Nickel Friesen.

Rheinheimer, Raymond L., 75, Shipshewana, Ind., died March 8 of a stroke. Survivors: wife, Florence; children Shirley Helmuth, Karen Coffee, Bonnie Swihart, Larry, Lonnie; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Burial: March 12 at Shipshewana by Carl Horner and Brent Eash.

Roth, Roy, 86, Milford, Neb., died Feb. 25 of congestive heart failure. Survivors: wife, Irene; children LeRoy, James, Terry, Janice Oswald; 11 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 28 at Milford by Marlin Kym.

Smith, Ralph S., 79, Landale, Pa., died March 12. Survivors: wife, Dorothy; children Nancy Boorse, Ralph, Janet Oplinger, Donna Bulgrien; seven grandchildren. Burial: March 16 by Gary Stenson.

Spangler, Myrtle M., 82, York, Pa., died Jan. 16. Survivor: husband, Mearle. Burial: Jan. 20 at York by Ronald French and Warren Tyson.

Stine, Allean, 80, York, Pa., died Nov. 2 of a stroke. Survivors: children E. Jean Bacon, James; eight grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Burial: Nov. 6 at Stoverstown, Pa., by Warren Tyson.

Stucky, Violet Kaufman, 69, Moundridge, Kan., died March 2 of cancer. Survivors: husband, Delmar; children Eric, Cassandra Wenger, Peggy Bissing; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; parents, Benjamin and Matilda Kaufman. Burial: March 5 at Moundridge by Tim Kliewer.

Uhler, Goldie Beier, 83, Henderson, Neb., died March 5 of cancer. Survivors: children Mary Jane Fosdick, William; six grandchildren. Burial: March 9 at Maxwell, Neb., by Marcia Yoder-Schrock.

Weirich, Joseph D., 78, Shipshewana, Ind., died Feb. 12 of carbon monoxide poisoning. Survivors: wife, Dorothy; children Cheryl Barnes, Maria Olsen, Brenda Ransley, Glen; five grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 16 at Shipshewana by Brian Arbuckle.

Wenger, Ethel Showalter, 93, Harrisonburg, Va., died Feb. 25. Survivors: Roy, William, Pauline Nice, Geneva Brunk, Janet Bollinger; 21 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: Feb. 28 at Harrisonburg by Glendon and Paul Good.

Widmer, George, 71, Iowa City, Iowa, died Dec. 12 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Alta; children Brenda Troyer, Brad, Lori Clark; nine grandchildren; parents, Daniel and Viola Widmer. Burial: Dec. 16 at Iowa City by Diane Zaerr and Paul Wiebe.

Wiens, Gerhard, 96, Beatrice, Neb., died Feb. 18. Survivors: Mary Ann Rodriguez, Claire Seemann, Mike, Myron; nine grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 21 at Beatrice by Weldon and Florence Schloneger.

Volovnik, Fyrne L. Smith, 68, Sellersville, Pa., died March 1 of heart failure. Survivors: husband, Albert; daughter, Brenda Gillespie; parents, Walter and Elsie Smith. Burial: March 5 at Blooming Glen, Pa., by Truman Brunk and Benjamin Stutzman.

Ziegler, Kathrine, 87, York, Pa., died Jan. 14 of a stroke. Survivors: four grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 17 at York by David Stoltzfus.

Classifieds

Eastern Mennonite University seeks ***men's volleyball coach***, appointment fall 1998. EMU seeks people who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices.

Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to William Hawk, VP and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email dean@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

Belleville Mennonite School needs a ***choral director and music teacher*** beginning in August 1998. Please contact Ray Baker, superintendent, P.O. Box 847, Belleville, PA 17004; 717-935-2184.

Bethany Christian Schools (grades 6 to 12; enrollment 285) invites applications for 1998-99 for the following positions: ***assistant principal*** and ***sixth-grade teacher***. The assistant principal oversees the daily operation of the school and serves as an instructional leader. Applicants should hold a master's in administration and hold, or be qualified to obtain, an Indiana administrator's license. The sixth-grade teacher, who will teach in a self-contained classroom, should hold an elementary teaching license.

Please forward resumes to Allan Dueck, principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499; 219-534-2567; fax 219-533-0150; email bethany@npcc.net.

Bethel College: Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., is currently accepting applications for the position of ***associate dean for student development***. The associate dean is responsible for initiating, facilitating and administering student life programs for the Bethel College community. Qualified candidates shall possess a minimum of a master's degree in an area relevant to the administration of student services, shall have demonstrated effectiveness or potential in student development work in a small college setting, and shall be able to advocate for the mission of Bethel College. A review of applicants will commence on April 20 and will continue until the position is filled.

Send a letter of inquiry and resume to Larry D. Friesen, chair of the associate dean search committee, President's Office, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117. Bethel College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following positions for the 1998-99 school year: ***social studies/personal finance instructor*** (85 percent time with benefits), one-year position; ***guidance counselor*** (50 percent time).

Send resume to Ronald L. Hertzler, acting principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446.

Chicago Mennonite Learning Center: Classroom teaching positions available at the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center—a K-8 multiracial, inner-city elementary school. We are in search of classroom teachers for ***1st/2nd-grade*** classroom as well as the ***7th/8th-grade*** classroom. These are full-time voluntary service positions. Housing, health insurance, living expenses and personal stipend are provided. CMLC also seeks a music teacher two days a week. This could be combined with a teacher's aide position for a full-time volunteer job. Applicants with teacher training and experience will be given preference. Ten-month contract begins Aug. 17.

For more information or to request application materials, contact Marvin Friesen, principal, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632; 773-735-9304.

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center retreat: "Leadership from Within the Congregation," June 12-14, 1998. Resource people are Myron Augsburger and Ervin Stutzman. For many years, Anabaptist churches called primary leaders from within the congregation. In recent years, congregations tend to look outside the church for a trained person. This retreat provides an opportunity for congregational representatives to learn how to develop leaders from within their own congregation. Weekend format includes teaching, Bible study, discussion and personal storytelling from two pastors.

Contact Laurelville Mennonite Church Center at 800-839-1021, or 724-423-2056, or bob%lmcc@mcimail.com. Discount for 3 or more from the same church.

Question #4:

"What is the difference between the Amish and the Mennonites?"

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Bethany Birches Camp seeks ***counselors, cook, assistant cook*** and ***kitchen and maintenance helpers*** for summer program. Contact Bethany Birches Camp, P.O. Box 257, Plymouth, VT 05056; 802-672-3959.

Eastern Mennonite University needs ***area coordinators***: Two 10-month, full-time live-in positions (July 15 to May 15). Master's degree or bachelor's degree with experience. Responsible for general administration of residence hall. Application deadline: April 20. EMU reserves the right to fill these positions before the application deadlines or to extend the deadline as circumstances may warrant. Multiethnic persons encouraged to apply.

Contact Human Resources Office at 540-432-4108; email ebybj@emu.edu.

Friendship Community, Lititz, Pa.: Full-time ***program supervisor*** position available. Qualifications: college degree and experience with people with developmental disabilities. Salary and excellent health plan. Call Denise Herr at 717-656-2466.

Goshen College: Starting August 1998, Goshen College seeks ***business information systems faculty*** member to teach undergraduate business information systems courses. Qualified candidate will hold MBA or doctorate and possess significant professional experience and demonstrated effectiveness as a teacher.

For further information, send resume to Paul A. Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email dean@goshen.edu. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Goshen College has openings for two ***residence hall directors***—one full-time and one part-time. For the part-time position, the college will consider adding additional responsibilities toward a full load depending on applicant's interests and qualifications.

A resident director is responsible for the administration of one or more residence halls housing approximately 200 students, represents the Student Development Division in the residence halls and presents student needs and concerns to the administration. The director also counsels students, enforces policies and standards, handles discipline and educational programming and selects, trains and supervises student staff. Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred. Members of under-represented groups and women are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Send letter of application, resume, and the names of three references to Larry Rupp, associate dean of students, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7543; fax 219-535-7660; email: larrylr@goshen.edu. Applications are encouraged through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu. Application deadline: May 1.

Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., is seeking individuals with a heart for ministry and a love for the outdoors to work in our summer program as ***lifeguards, wranglers*** (horsemanship) and ***kitchen assistants***. Contact Mike Ford at 800-864-7747, or 717-896-3441, for more information.

Mennonite Health Services seeks an individual for ***executive leadership*** of health-care services in a rural community. Services include acute care, outpatient services, long-term care. Expansion with assisted living is planned. The position requires expertise with health-care operations, assessment and planning, and communication with internal and community constituents. The not-for-profit system is in a community with strong church presence.

Send confidential inquires and/or resume to MHS, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526; fax 219-534-3254.

OrrVilla Retirement Community, Orrville, Ohio, seeks ***executive director***. Responsibilities include overall program, financial and staff management, maintaining relations with the church and local community and providing leadership and vision to a growing retirement community. Qualifications include organizational, communication, human resource and financial management skills.

Send confidential inquiries and/or resume to Morris Stutzman, president, 2171-B Eagle Pass, Wooster, OH 44691.

Mennonite Board of Missions: *Service Adventure leaders* needed in Norristown, Pa.; Champaign, Ill., and South Bend, Ind. Service Adventure is an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2-month service-learning program for young adults ages 17 to 20. Leadership experience, interest in young adults, spiritual discernment and conflict resolution skills are desired. Minimum age 24. Two-year term. Accepting applications now for terms beginning fall 1998.

Information: Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, 219-294-7523; email Kent@mbm.org.

Fairmount Homes, a Mennonite-related retirement community near Ephrata, Lancaster County, Pa., seeks ***controller***. Responsible for all financial aspects of the facility. Qualifications: four-year degree in accounting, business or related field, plus experience in financial management.

Direct inquires/resumes to Administrator, Fairmount Homes Retirement Community, 219 Cats Back Road, Ephrata, PA 17522; 717-354-4111.

Classified ad space is available at $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

How to grow a Mennonite church

by Steve Ratzlaff

In Mennonite circles, we have become so obsessed with growing that we have adopted techniques and methods not in keeping with our heritage or personality. In fact, many of these techniques are foreign to what we consider important.

For example, a strong sense of community has long been one of the foremost characteristics of our Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage. A close personal walk with Christ and with our Christian brothers and sisters is essential. Making 20,000 phone calls to prospective church members is out of sync with our style of doing things. What does that say about community? It says it is not important. The one being called is just another number.

Another example of our obsession to grow at all costs surfaces in taking the word Mennonite out of our church names. Churches have done it. Mennonite denominations have done it. Why? Because the term Mennonite carries "cultural baggage" and beliefs that might keep people away from our doors. The peace stance may keep someone who supports the military from feeling comfortable in our congregations. However, it may also draw people to our churches who feel this is what Christ taught.

Church growth gurus suggest that the best, most effective path to church growth is to remove the obstacles from our churches that keep people away. The result is megachurches that minister to people's individual and spiritual needs but do not speak to the evils of society. Mennonites have long maintained the importance of meeting their members' spiritual needs but also in speaking to the evil around them. By watering down that witness we may grow faster but may also lose our identity.

Distinctive Mennonite identity: I have pastored two urban Mennonite churches in the past 16 years. Seattle Mennonite Church is a vibrant Anabaptist congregation that tripled its membership during the 1980s and spun off a sister congregation. First Mennonite Church in Lincoln, Neb., has almost doubled its membership in the last five years. Both congregations grew while striving to maintain a distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite identity. Or, to put it more boldly, they grew because they maintained a distinctive Mennonite identity.

In the 1520s the Anabaptists had many detractors, but most critics were struck by how these reformers lived holy lives and how they cared for each other. They loved each other, accepted each other and welcomed seekers into their midst. There was a tone of openness and tolerance and acceptance. That didn't mean everybody could do whatever he or she wanted, because they were also known for their holy living. But Anabaptists initially were open to seekers from all walks of life.

This same tone or atmosphere leads to growth. This methodology fits Mennonite churches. It also is harder to accomplish. Making 20,000 phone calls is a lot easier, but it isn't in keeping with our style as Mennonites.

A sense of community was also important to our Anabaptist ancestors. The community interpreted the Bible, offered encouragement and admonition and fostered obedience and faithfulness. Relationships were the backbone of people's life together.

Growing a Mennonite church is different from growing a nondenominational church in our society. We shouldn't expect to grow Mennonite churches using others' methods.

Churches grow that consciously create a sense of community in a fractured and individualistic world. This is done in many ways, but small groups are important. In smaller, more intimate settings, true community is fostered.

Faith and action: Anabaptists also were strongly committed to living out their faith in the world. It was not enough to believe that Jesus is Lord; that belief must express itself in the ways they were involved in the world around them. Faith and action were inseparable.

This is also true in growing Mennonite churches today. In Seattle, people found Mennonites relating to street people, working in homeless shelters and soup kitchens, involved in military tax resistance and actively opposing war and oppression. As people rubbed shoulders with these Mennonites throughout the city, they also chose to worship with them. Because faith was active, people wanted to be part of that church.

I've experienced the same thing with another Mennonite church in Lincoln, Neb. Neither of these groups built walls to keep the Holy Spirit out. Since both were relatively young congregations, they had not developed years of tradition. The Spirit of God seemed to move people more easily.

Growing a Mennonite church is different from growing a nondenominational church in our society. We shouldn't expect to grow Mennonite churches using others' methods. They won't turn out to be Mennonite. However, we can grow dynamic churches if we are willing to be true to ourselves and not try too hard to be someone we are not.

Steve Ratzlaff is pastor at First Mennonite Church, Lincoln, Neb.

In Seattle, a new group of people emerged periodically that felt called to serve God in a specific way, whether to open a Ten Thousand Villages store, to oppose U.S. nuclear weapons policy or to feed the homeless.

In Seattle and Lincoln, we welcomed people into these congregations and cared for them despite differences of opinion. People felt cared for, like they belonged.
—Steve Ratzlaff

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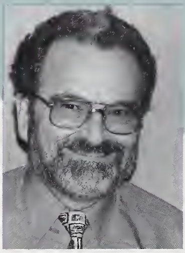

Chaos is the start of something new

by J. Lorne Peachey

Today we call it Holy Week. Back then the end of it must have seemed like four days in hell.

I've tried to imagine what it must have been like to have been a disciple of Jesus during that last week of his life. First there was the sensuous incident at dinner when a woman anointed his feet with perfume and dried them with her hair. Then came a Last Supper, when Jesus began a practice that still has the church arguing about its meaning. All this was followed by prayer in a garden, during which, Luke tells us, Jesus sweat "as it were drops of blood"—surely a ghastly sight.

Then imagine what it must have been like to see Jesus betrayed by one of your brothers. When another disciple tried to defend Jesus by cutting off a soldier's ear, Jesus promptly healed the ear back into place. Then there was the show trial, the mockery and finally the screams and the gore of the crucifixion. Is it any wonder none of us would be left at the cross in our distress and confusion?

Jesus' resurrection allows us to embrace discomfort. We can still shout with confidence, "Alleluia! He is risen!"

Though it was by no means fraught with as much emotion or anguish, I thought of Jesus' last days as I sat through five days of joint meetings of the general boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) late last month (see stories beginning on page 5). Here too was confusion and anguish, not only for those of us on the sidelines but also for those participating in the discussions of two significant issues for the new Mennonite Church that will result from integration: (1) how the new church should be structured; (2) who can belong, who cannot.

Some general board members wept as they wrestled with structures for the new church. They wanted one body that would span the Canada-U.S. border; was that not the spirit of the Wichita 95 decision to integrate? But they also acknowledged that for years, in both GC and MC circles, U.S. concerns and agenda have dominated churchwide discussions and decisions. Canada, they said, must have an equal voice in the worldwide Mennonite church—and general board members unanimously agreed to what they call the "one denomination, two-country structure." As they did so, they voiced fears that the future would see more emphasis on the "two" than on the "one."

Equally troubling and confusing for the joint general boards was the issue of who will belong to the new Mennonite Church. For some, if you're now MC or GC, you'll automatically be part of the new denomination. Others want a set of criteria or beliefs to which congregations and conferences must subscribe to belong.

Sparking the debate, expressed with strong emotions on both sides, is the issue of homosexuality. Since 1986, three MC conferences have asked congregations to leave because they accept noncelibate gays and lesbians as members. All these congregations had dual affiliation, and they are still GC members as we come into integration. Now what?

Confusion like this "is useful because it is through chaos that old systems are reborn," William M. Easum writes in *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers* (Abingdon, 1995). Systems do not wind down and die. The church is not going to the dogs as it faces the uncertainty and confusion of the future. For "without chaos, there is nothing new," Easum writes.

Is there a more ultimate example of Easum's words than Easter? Jesus' disciples had to be the most dispirited band of followers ever to walk on this earth. Yet, just when they knew there was no future, just when they could do nothing more than cower behind closed doors, God's Spirit invaded human history with the greatest miracle of all time.

Faith in God leads me to declare this resurrection power for the church today. In the midst of difficult discussions and turbulent issues, when we cannot know the outcome or the future, the resurrection of Jesus leads me to agree with Easum: "Chaos is desirable because it is the start of something new."

I also read beyond the resurrection story into the Acts of the Apostles and find that, as Easum writes, "Almost every time people come in contact with the risen Christ or the Holy Spirit, chaos occurs and the church is moved out of its comfort zone."

Jesus' resurrection allows us to embrace this discomfort. Without a clear view of the future, without knowing exactly how it all will end, we can still shout with confidence, "Alleluia! He is risen! Alleluia!"—*jlp*

the Mennonite
April 14, 1998

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Called to anti-racism

Conrado Hinojosa (left), a member of the Damascus Road anti-racism team for the Mennonite Church General Board, welcomes Damascus Road co-coordinators Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer to General Board offices for a Damascus Road orientation in February.

5 Church struggles with housing homeless
6 GC-MC meetings not business as usual
8 What's in a name?
11 Writing the invisible presence

T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

For the record

Please continue to include births, marriages and deaths in For the Record. Even though I don't know that many people mentioned, I still enjoy it very much. How else would I have found out the deaths of some dear older brothers and sisters? Not that I knew many of them personally, but I felt I knew them to a certain extent through learning about them and their work.—*Grace Yoder, Salisbury, Pa.*

I am in my mid-20s, and like J. Lorne Peachey's niece in his editorial (*The Mennonite*, March 3), I turn to the births, deaths and marriages section of the magazine first. I often have not kept in touch with friends, and this section is one way for me to learn of significant events in their lives. I am afraid that without the "census data," the magazine would end up in the recycling bin without being opened.—*Kimberely Loewen, Las Vegas*

As a 22-year-old member of the Mennonite Church, I beseech the editorial staff not to eliminate For the Record. I believe J. Lorne Peachey's editorial is correct in asserting that this section fosters community.—*Lyle Beidler, State College, Pa.*

In For the Record, I would expand the events and workers sections but eliminate births and marriages.—*Gladys Sprunger, Berne, Ind.*

If all congregations participate as invited, For the Record will faithfully mirror the ethnic and cultural makeup of the church. Over the past decades, *Gospel Herald* obituaries have gradually included more Asian, Hispanic and African-American names, demonstrating powerfully the new ethnic mix in our church community. —*Varden Leasa, Downington, Pa.*

I like looking over birth and marriage announcements and hope *The Mennonite* will not consider dropping them. Very little space is used, and I am sure the cost of printing them is small. All Mennonites are free to send in announcements, and that includes Asians, Hispanics and African-Americans.—*Mervin H. Nolt, Evansville, Ind.*

Laughing matters

With his comic strip "Pontius' Puddle," Joel Kauffmann has a profound gift that challenges me to look at my beliefs and practices in new ways—and makes me laugh. Comic strips and cartoons take little space but often drive home a point better than well-written articles. I urge you to find a place in *The Mennonite* for humor such as "Pontius' Puddle" that causes us to both laugh and learn.—*J. Kevin Miller, Goshen, Ind.*

Whatever happened to "Pontius' Puddle?" Certainly a little humor is useful in helping one through the vicissitudes of life.—*John A. Hertzler, Mathews, Va.*

The homosexuality debate

In the Feb. 24 *The Mennonite*, two letters complain that those who support the acceptance of homosexuality have not addressed Scripture, while two more assert that Scripture is clear in condemning homosexuality. My own experience suggests that no congregation or individual has challenged the official position of the church on this issue without first undertaking a thorough study of the relevant biblical texts, and that thoughtful, devoted Christians can come to very different conclusions when they read them. Just because one group does not understand or accept the conclusions of the other does not mean that the Bible has not been addressed.

The Bible is of vital importance to all Christians involved in this debate. What is at issue is how—not whether—we read it.—*David Breckbill, Beaumaris, Wales*

The Mennonite does not need to lend its time and space to the airing of homosexual viewpoints that argue for their position. It is ours to hold to biblical principle, not to do their advertising and promotion. People who argue against a God-defined wrong cannot receive forgiveness if they remain impenitent. Our work as God's children is not to make another comfortable with their dysfunction. It is to lead them with the truth, albeit gently.—*Royce McKitrick, Aurora, Colo.*

God is on his way and could appear at any time. If you are a man, would you want to be in bed with another man at that time? Turn to God before it is too late. Never take your eyes from his holy light.—*Edward Lee Lyttle III, Burkeville, Va.*

The Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 found a compromise between two opposing positions. Gentiles won't have to become Jews to be accepted, provided they "abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity." Could this be the model for congregations such as Germantown Mennonite Church? For starters, would it not "seem good to the Holy

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Incorporating *Gospel Herold* (1908-1998) and *The Mennonite* (1885-1998)

The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453.

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say readers say

Spirit and to us" to accept gay and lesbian Christians provided they live in wholesome, convenanted relationships and abstain from unchastity?—*Leland Harder, North Newton, Kan.*

Memorializing John Howard Yoder

After reading the March 3 *The Mennonite*, I found it very disturbing that three pages were devoted to memorializing the life and teachings of John Howard Yoder. The four paragraphs in those three pages that spoke to the incidents of sexual misconduct were, at best, an awkward acknowledgment of the seriousness of those actions. Both the article and the editorial focused on the impact of this man's theological writings and teachings on the lives of the authors. That is not to be debated since it came from their personal experiences.

But I do question whether equal time and space would be given to any of the numerous women whose lives were impacted negatively as a result of their personal experiences with this same man.

Ted Grimsrud pointed out in his article that "many of our great heroes have had feet of clay." But in the Feb. 24 *The Mennonite*, we were reminded that forgiveness does not absolve perpetrators of responsibility for their actions. So should the weight of theological teachings bring absolution in this case? —*Mona Krievins, Newton, Kan.*

In the introduction to his book *The Priestly Kingdom*, John Howard Yoder wrote that when Anabaptists claim faithfulness to their confessional tradition, they have less excuse for falling short of that biblically rooted call to faith. Yoder was surely less guilty of that than most. But because of accusations and opposition he

continued on page 4

faced near the end of his life, which he tried to take responsibility for, we do not know how influential his writings will be in the future. Nevertheless, I believe the message Yoder brought will be no more deterred than was the gospel by the crucifixion of Jesus, the stoning of Stephen or the drowning of early Anabaptists.—*Lynn Preheim, Freeman, S.D.*

Ted Grimsrud's article was the best reflection on John Howard Yoder by a Mennonite publication I have seen. Although Yoder's gifts may have seemed high and mighty or deeply flawed, he kept pointing us toward Christ in today's world.—*Joseph M.S. Miller, Dayton, Ohio*

Persecution's worth

Persecution and martyrdom lead to resurrection, new life and phenomenal growth in the church. My heart goes out in prayer and support to our Christian brothers and sisters in Indonesia who are facing trials (*The Mennonite*, March 10). But I have no doubt in my mind that the gold that is being burned will prove its worth in the end.—*Thinagar P. Sitther, Hammon, Okla.*

What increase?

In 1997, the General Conference Mennonite Church oversubscribed the budget by 107.6 percent (*The Mennonite*, March 3). That is not so difficult if we keep lowering our budget each year. The sad fact is that we gave less in 1997 than we did in 1993. So my question simply is: What increase in giving are we talking about? 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 should be a challenge to us to excel in the grace of giving. —*Werner Zacharias, Fiske, Sask.*

No foundation

Retaining 1 Corinthians 3:11 on the cover of the new *The Mennonite* (as was on the cover of the former *The Mennonite*) would have helped me with the Jehovah's Witnesses who came to my door today. I insisted on a trade of periodicals, and they rejected *The Mennonite*: no visible Scripture verses.—*Muriel Thiessen Stackley, Pawnee Rock, Kan.*

Reading problems

The print in *The Mennonite* is difficult to read. I will not be reading this magazine if this is not corrected. I hope you can make it more readable because I enjoyed *Gospel Herald* very much.—*Ann Bigelow, Burlington, Mass.*

I want to express concern with the shiny paper. I am in my 50s and find *The Mennonite* hard to read. I am sure our older readers have problems with print also.—*Dorothy Weaver, East Earl, Pa.*

Insight's absence

I appreciate the format of *The Mennonite* and look forward to settling into a style that fits its new, expanded constituency. One thing I had hoped would be incorporated from the past was *Gospel Herald's* biblically based feature article. I miss the insightful material that was often presented this way.—*Dave Bergen, Steinbach, Man.*

Not yet perfect

On a scale of one to 10, I rate the new magazine a six. Drop the births, deaths and marriages; use better quality paper (surely you can do better than shiny paper) and bolder or larger print. Then maybe the magazine will rate a 10.—*Harold P. Bloch, Emmaus, Pa.*

Mennonite sermons

Perhaps the problem with the menu of Mennonite sermons, to use June Alliman Yoder's analogy (*The Mennonite*, March 17), is the diet. The majority of Mennonite sermons I have heard recently were topical with biblical quotations thrown in to support the view of the minister. To me, a biblical sermon is one that takes a passage of Scripture, gives us the context and goes on to suggest guidance for our lives. If my observation of prooftext preaching is typical, we should not be surprised that our discussions of issues frequently employ biblical quotations taken out of context. —*Henry D. Weaver, Goshen, Ind.*

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Opening doors for justice lets in tensions

Church struggles with housing homeless family

PHILIPPI, W.Va.—On a cold night last November, a family with seven children slept in their car while a decision about their situation was being made at the local Mennonite church. The next day would begin a time of interaction between two groups of people that would teach unanticipated lessons.

How should a church go about deciding to open its doors and let a homeless family live in its meeting place? Carefully, observes Philippi Mennonite Church, which holds its services in a house.

"When I heard about the possibility of having the family move in, I thought, 'Great! Open the doors!'" says Kirsten Beachy, a member of the Mennonite Board of Missions Service Adventure unit supported by the congregation. "But I didn't realize the costs at the time."

When a family that hasn't had a home for some time moves into a large, warm house, there comes relief and thankfulness in the first weeks that leaves the church and the family feeling good. Expectations were written out and signed and everyone felt the agreement would work.

But then the problems began.

The meeting room was soaked in the unmistakable odor of tobacco smoke, even though smoking had been prohibited. Toilets overflowed. The place became a mess.

"You had to be either Christlike and let the family stay no matter what or [be] strict about the rules," says Ted Spangler, another Service Adventure worker. "There was no in-between."

When problems first came up, reminders were delivered to the family by various congregational members. But when the family's stay began to stretch into January and February with no change in their habits or any possibility of a house coming open for them, tensions began to rise.

In a Feb. 8 church meeting, the congregation decided to give the family a 30-day notice to find other housing. But the church members also committed themselves to remaining in support of the family and working actively with them to find appropriate housing.

With assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the family has since moved into their own house. The congregation contributed $100 to help cover costs of setting up housekeeping.

"We need to know the next time we head into something like this exactly what we expect and what we are OK with," says congregational member Janie Johnston. "We didn't do that this time. And we are learning."—*Minnette B. Hostetler for MBM News Service*

> You had to be either Christlike and let the family stay no matter what or [be] strict about the rules. There was no in-between.
>
> —*Ted Spangler*

Welfare changes mean changes for MCC help

WHITESBURG, Ky.—For many welfare recipients, assistance as they know it is ending this spring. Some in Appalachia are beginning to feel the pinch, posing a dilemma for local Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers.

"Requests for material assistance are on the rise," says Andrea Schrock Wenger, co-coordinator for MCC U.S. Appalachia programs.

Filling requests from pantries and shelters for canned meat, comforters, sheets, towels and used clothing clearly help meet immediate needs of some people.

Despite a 30-year federal war on poverty, families in Appalachia still suffer substandard housing and improper nutrition. Traditional jobs in coal and textile industries have been replaced by fast food and other service industry jobs that don't pay a living wage.

Yet Wenger and other MCC workers are reluctant to put all their energy into "band-aid" solutions. "We want our primary energies to go into building relationships and addressing root causes of poverty," Wenger says.

The recent marked increase in requests has spurred the MCC Appalachia team to think about long-term vision. MCC has distributed material resources in Appalachia throughout its 34-year history in the region, especially after natural disasters. In recent years MCC Appalachia has tried to base material distribution on uniqueness of need, providing canned meat to several area food pantries as well as blankets and health kits to fire victims.—*Delphine Martin of MCC News Service*

MCC photo by Howard Zehr

Justin White of Hindman, Ky., sands one of his woodcarvings, which he sells to help supplement his government disability checks. More and more Appalachians are seeing their assistance decrease.

GC, MC organizations' March meetings not business as usual

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bring 350 people together for the first time, and they are going to spend a lot of time getting to know each other. Factor in the ambiguities of structural change, and not much work gets done.

The General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church boards, commissions and groups gathered on the Bethel College campus March 19-24, often in joint meetings. It was the first time the GC and MC organizations met at the same place at the same time.

"I enjoyed getting to know the people who do the same kind of work in the other denomination," said Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) member Kathy Goering Reid. "The bad part of that was not having time do our own work."

In light of ongoing MC-GC integration issues, Jim Stutzman Amstutz, also of CHM, said uncertainty was the hallmark of this year's meetings. "It's an awkward transition phase, where we're looking for direction and no one is sure where it's coming from," he said.

The GC and MC general boards approved organizing the integrated church into U.S. and Canadian structures. In other meetings during the weekend:

- The Commission on Overseas Mission approved Ron Flaming as the new COM executive secretary, starting this summer. Flaming, currently serving with COM in India, will succeed Glendon Klaassen, who will retire May 31. Klaassen has been executive secretary since 1994, and before that was COM secretary for Latin America for 16 years and served in Colombia for 18 years.

Rich Preheim

Steve Cheramie Risingsun of United Native Ministries (left to right), Regina Shands Stoltzfus of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Juanita Nuñez of the Hispanic Mennonite Convention and Nancy Good Sider of MBCM listen during a meeting of MBCM and the Mennonite Church associate groups March 21 in North Newton, Kan.

- Mennonite Board of Missions approved a Great Lakes Discipleship Center in Fort Wayne, Ind., for short-term training and outreach assignments. After three months in Fort Wayne, participants will serve eight to 12 months in other locations.
- The GC Division of General Services met with the MC General Board Finance Committee to discuss fund-raising for integration. DGS also met with Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries to discuss fund-raising philosophies for the new church.
- Mennonite Men worked on strategies for integrating its organization. Mennonite Men also approved grants for new church buildings for River of Life, Sweet Home, Ore. ($30,000 U.S.); Christ Community Mennonite Church, Schaumburg, Ill. ($50,000 U.S.); and Covenant Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man. ($16,400 Cdn.).—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service with Tom Price of MBM News Service*

> I enjoyed getting to know the people who do the same kind of work in the other denomination. The bad part of that was not having time do our own work.
>
> —*Kathy Goering Reid*

MCC responds to Nicaraguan food shortage

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Commitee (MCC) will provide $12,500 for food assistance for people in rural Nicaragua in the wake of devastating effects of the El Niño weather system. Fifteen deaths have already been reported due to hunger.

Harsh rainstorms in November and December caused too much humidity, destroying crops. Bean and corn crop losses ranged from 80 to 100 percent in the first planting and 60 to 100 percent in the second planting, report area MCC workers. El Niño has also produced drought.

MCC will provide for the purchase and transportation of 32 metric tons of maize and rice and 15 metric tons of oil. MCC personnel will work with Mennonite congregations in Nicaragua and with a local evangelical organization.

MCC has 11 workers in Nicaragua, involved in income generation, community services and health assignments.—*MCC News Service*

Some church agencies honor tax resisters' wishes

AKRON, Pa.—An informal survey of 17 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ institutions in North America has found that few have written policies related to war taxes.

But some do honor requests from employees not to withhold all of their federal income taxes or the portion which would otherwise go for military-related expenditures. Others have policies opposing Internal Revenue Service levies of accounts of war tax resisters.

Most institutions surveyed had not fielded such requests within the past 10 years.

The General Conference Mennonite Church has had a tax-withholding policy in place since 1983 and has implemented it several times. The Mennonite Church General Board agreed in 1991 to "honor the request of an employee who for conscience' sake requests that the military portion of his or her federal income tax not be withheld."

Mennonite Mutual Aid last December approved a policy asking the Internal Revenue Service to lift levies related to war taxes. "To the extent legally possible, MMA supports its members who are protesting the payment of war taxes by initially requesting that IRS collection attempts or levies on MMA-controlled assets be lifted," the policy states.

Pennsylvania Mennonite Federal Credit Union in February adopted a similiar position.

In a February letter responding to an IRS levy on an employee's wages, Mennonite Central Committee wrote: "We do not want to do anything as an organization that would be an offense to the conscience and beliefs of such individuals or that would suggest support for the world's arms race. ... We would therefore respectfully request that the levy ... be withdrawn."—*Titus Peachey for MCC News Service*

OTTAWA—Members of a Canadian coalition asking that their income taxes not be used for military purposes say progress has been made after a recent meeting with parliamentary representatives and national government officials.

Chris Derksen Hiebert of Mennonite Central Committee Canada says their ideas were well received. "The proposals we put forward in the past were seen by government officials as too cumbersome and directive," he says.

Other coalition members included the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada and Quakers. Their plan would allow conscientious objectors to register with the government on their tax returns. The military portion of their taxes would be placed in a special account to be used for nonmilitary purposes chosen by the government.—*MCC Canada News Service*

Killologist addresses peace conference

Academic, activist organization honors CPT

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—David A. Grossman is a killologist. A retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and chair of the military science department at Arkansas State University, he studies what he calls "killogy": the root causes of violent crime, psychological costs of war and healing processes.

Grossman never expected to put his expertise to work in his own backyard.

He lives in Jonesboro, Ark., where on March 24 two junior high school students shot and killed four other students and a teacher. Grossman, who was on the scene less than two hours after the shooting, helped serve as a counselor and instructor in the incident's aftermath.

"Here I am applying the lessons of the battlefield here in my hometown," he said.

Grossman was one of the keynote speakers at the concurrent annual conferences of the Peace Studies Association (PSA) and the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development (COPRED), hosted by Bethel College April 2-5.

PSA is the professional organization for college peace studies programs. COPRED includes peace academicians and activists.

While Grossman's visit to Bethel had been scheduled well prior to the Jonesboro shootings, the tragedy gave his appearance more urgency. In an interview with *The Mennonite*, he placed "at least 50 percent of the culpability" for the attack on TV shows and video games.

"Violence [is] being fed to our children as entertainment," Grossman said.

He cited statistics showing that murder rates double in societies within 15 years after the introduction of TV. Meanwhile, incidents such as the Jonesboro shootings, are "identical to what the children play when they go to the arcade and play point-and-shoot video games."

During its conference, COPRED presented Christian Peacemaker Teams with its Social Courage Award, particularly highlighting CPT's continuing work in the embattled West Bank city of Hebron.

The weekend also featured workshops, panel discussions, plenary sessions and a memorial service for Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi.—*Rich Preheim*

This is the land that I promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... Deuteronomy 34 4

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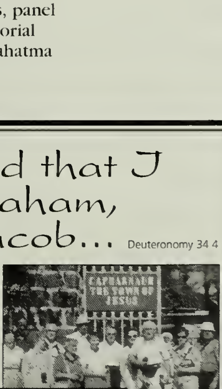

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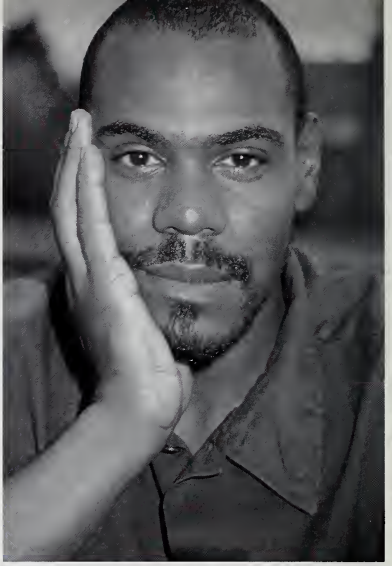

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What's in a name?

Does one person's experience of God's Spirit say something to the larger Mennonite church about racism?

by Tobin Miller Shearer

The defeat of racism in the Mennonite church will include new understanding and good organizing, but it will ultimately be a matter of the Spirit.

—Noel Santiago

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to let the oppressed go free.—Luke 4:18

Jesus' words brushed my ears as the warm Texas winds rustled papers around us. John Powell said, “Who are we trying to free? People who are blind to their need. When we release people from their bondage, we, too, are being freed. We are Christ's legs. We are undoing things that have been done. They have not killed the Spirit.”

We prayed together and gave witness to God's work in our lives. Lavonne Miller described how her initial resistance to becoming involved in anti-racism training disappeared as it “changed my life.” Iris deLeon-Hartshorn spoke of the renewed hope she found in the midst of the stressful work of dismantling racism. Maggie DeLeon referred to the many years she has struggled with racism in the Mennonite church.

Then Lavonne spoke of the healing she received while recovering from cancer. “God is with us. I am supposed to be here. There is a reason we are here,” she said.

Pastor Vargas then described how he had died while praying at his church and had been brought back to life 15 minutes later by the prayers of his congregation. He left the hospital four days later, healed of internal bleeding. “The Lord then started using me. Seventeen people were converted.”

Noel Santiago broke in, “You'll have to speak to this, Tobin, but I think God is demonstrating through you what must happen in the church. Just as you have been given a new name, God wants to give a new name to the Mennonite church, for what God desires to do in the church God will do it first with its leaders.”

We stayed up late talking and praying. Iris described how hard it gets when racism rears its head at every opportunity. Noel said, “The defeat of racism in the Mennonite church will include new understanding and good organizing, but it will ultimately be a matter of the Spirit.”

To suggest that any one person's experience may be a call to a broader community is bold at best, egocentric at worst. So I offer this witness for further discernment by the community of faith.

A new name: Last fall, after a visit from angels, physical healing and a call to move from rage and despair to trust in God, I received a new name (see “You're doing the right thing,” page 9). Out of this process, with all its struggle and strangeness, I have been called to a discipline of prayer, dependence on God's providence and to a deeper belief in God's action in history.

Our group discernment that night in Texas led us to believe that the Mennonite church is being called to a similar process of renewal and dependence on God. We feel this call is directed not just to the process of integration but to the inclusion of new, anti-racist structures that will empower all God's children to have an equal place at the table.

What form that will take we don't yet know, but I will not be surprised if it involves the release of white people from the bondage of and addiction to white privilege and power.

A spiritual renewal: In the midst of accepting a new name, I have been called to go where I do not want to. Once I would have scoffed at the notion of God speaking through angels, visions and prophecy. Yet in this process my rational space has been invaded, trumped and laid bare. God is asking me to let go of the

AMBS Window

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Focus

Cooperating with God

by Marcus G. Smucker

In seminary I was well trained. I learned to do biblical exposition, to think theologically, to be ethical in life and practice, to teach, preach, lead worship, do pastoral care and counseling, and much more.

But when I began to serve as a pastor I knew little about spiritual practices, such as prayer, silence, meditation, journaling, and praying the scriptures. Without training in these disciplines I did not know how to adequately nurture my own spiritual life and even less how to adequately nurture the spiritual formation of the congregation.

As a pastor, during a time of crisis in the mid 1970s, I learned about spiritual disciplines. I discovered practices that could help me become more deeply prayerful and reflective. I learned new ways to live in the presence of God. I also learned new ways to help nurture the congregation in its experience of God.

Paul spoke of "Christ being formed in you" (Gal 4:19), "being conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29) and "being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another (II Cor 3:18). It is clear that *spiritual formation* is at the core of the Christian life. As Christ is being formed in us, we are conformed to Jesus and transformed into the image of God. It is God who transforms us but not against our will. We cooperate with the Spirit by giving ourselves to practices and behaviors that open us to God's presence and reign in our lives.

Spiritual formation is essential for students as they prepare for pastoral ministry. Just as training in Bible, theology, and history are important tools for ministry, so also is training in prayer, meditation, and worship. In effective ministry, spirituality is essential, not optional.

The concern for formation and transformation is present in the entire curriculum at AMBS. The study of scripture, thinking theologically and ethically, understanding God's work in the history of the church and learning the practice of ministry are all experiences in which students meet God. We also give explicit attention to spiritual formation through courses, seminars, and special retreats.

Spiritual guidance is another opportunity for spiritual growth. Many students meet individually with someone every two or three weeks to reflect on their relationship with God. My work in spiritual guidance with students has brought some of the most sacred encounters in my experience of ministry.

I too have benefited from receiving spiritual guidance. I consider this a most sacred privilege to meet with someone each month to reflect on my life before God. These meetings are like a prism in which I hold before God my experiences of life in the preceding days, and from which I go forth to serve again. In this sense it is much like my experience in worship but with heightened personal accountability for my life and work.

Our hope and prayer is that in all our work we are partners with God. As students participate in courses, practical ministry experiences, spiritual guidance and other opportunities for spiritual formation, we at AMBS are responding to the invitation to notice and cooperate with God's transforming work in their lives.

Marcus G. Smucker is associate professor of pastoral theology at AMBS. Beginning in July, he will be adjunct faculty in spiritual formation and pastoral care.

Inside

Three stories of spiritual growth at AMBS

Helping others be aware of God

President's Window

Marlene Kropf, assistant professor in spiritual formation and worship, leads a seminar on the spiritual discipline of journaling. Marlene completed her Doctor of Ministry degree in 1997; her doctoral project was entitled, "Singing as a Sacrament: An Exploration of the Role of Hymn Singing in Mennonite Spiritual Formation." At AMBS, Marlene teaches courses in worship, prayer, and congregational spirituality.

Growing spiritually is a part of AMBS study

Several years ago the theme of spirituality left me with an uneasy feeling. One of my friends was studying in the area of pastoral counseling and she told me about a classmate who was more interested in being a spiritual director than a pastoral counselor, so she changed the focus of her studies.

I thought this was odd, especially for a Mennonite. The only time I heard about spirituality was in settings where people were not Christians but they acknowledged people's spiritual interests and needs.

In my mind, those who chose to be followers of Jesus Christ did not need spirituality. Imagine my surprise to discover that AMBS offered programs specializing in spirituality.

My skepticism continued, though under cover, as I began studying at AMBS.

When I took the course, "Foundations of Worship and Preaching," we were required to meet weekly with a spiritual friend. We shared our spiritual journeys, supported each other's attempts to walk with God daily, and prayed for and with each other. The following fall, I participated in a silent retreat focusing on the fruits of the vine. As I sat leaning against a tree, the soothing warm wind became as the very breath of God to me. The Creator drew me near that day.

Soon I immersed myself in a prayer seminar and I learned that some of the spiritual disciplines I had been forcing myself to do were not life-giving to me. I also learned that there are unlimited ways to pray and I found myself being spiritually awakened.

This year, I decided to have a spiritual director to help me remain alert to my relationships with God and to grow in my faith journey. In addition, I am offering myself to a Goshen College student as his spiritual mentor.

Growing spiritually has been part of my experience at AMBS and, even more, my understanding of the word spirituality has increased. It no longer fills me with skepticism!

- *Brian Burkholder, senior student in the Master of Divinity program*

The joy of praying abroad

When I was baptized, I think that I knew something about prayer. But I am afraid that I did not start my prayer life with joy. I learned "about" prayer, but I did not learn to pray.

Mostly, I prayed only when I was asked to pray. It was not difficult for me to pick up the words from the Scripture, the sermons, and other members' prayer, to add my own literary talent, and to integrate them into a sophisticated prayer.

Soon after I arrived at AMBS, I found myself being unable to pray. Coming to an English-speaking community, I lost my fluency to organize a prayer. I knew very little about how to pray in English. I needed many samples and models in English just as I did in Japanese. I gradually found that something had been missing in my prayer life.

The community life at AMBS helped me to start my prayer life over. The worship experiences in chapel showed me the diverse forms of prayer. With silence and a few words, I began praying my own prayer. The spiritual direction program offered me a place where I did not need to be a good prayer leader, or to always say something nice to God. A prayer group also enriched my prayer as we met weekly. It was amazing to know how the group prayer was essential to the individual life of prayer.

My personal relationship with God became much closer by having a distance from my rhetoric. Now that I am back in Japan, I have tried to show the congregation a variety of prayers, hoping each member will feel involved in the joy of prayer.

- *Hiro Katano, 1997 graduate with the Master of Arts in Peace Studies; currently studying at Chuo University, Tokyo.*

Setting the direction I want to go

My years at AMBS have been a time of unprecedented spiritual growth. Among all the resources here that have contributed to that growth, spiritual direction has been the one I consider most formative. I was only dimly aware of such a function before I came here; now I can hardly imagine being without it.

Simply put, a spiritual director is one who helps another discern their own spiritual directions. After our opening silence and prayer, my first director always started the conversation with, "And where have you been finding God these past weeks?" Like my mother coming back to the kitchen sink from a trip to her garden, I open up my apron and tumble out the vegetables from my garden: the events, concerns, failures and joys that make up my life. Together, we sort through them and my director helps me to discern the Spirit's presence and movement in the large and small issues and events of my daily life.

With the help of that prayerful discerning eye, I more quickly recognize patterns of behavior and become aware of growth; I see answered prayer and healing. And it has a protective element as well; when I confess shortcomings and temptations to another, I am less likely to continue to fall prey to them; and fears exposed to another in the presence of God lose some of their power. At times, my director has spoken hard truth to me, questioning my habits and assumptions, and challenging me to make the difficult choices and decisions necessary to be a more faithful follower of Christ.

An old Chinese proverb says, "If we don't change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are going." Spiritual direction has been a resource that has helped me to look carefully at where I am, where I am going, and to make the needed changes toward the direction I truly want to go.

- Linda Nafziger-Meiser, senior in the Master of Divinity program

Helping others be aware of God

For pastors and others who want training in how to help people grow in their faith, AMBS offers a Spiritual Guidance Seminar. Each year, a group of up to eight participants meets five times with AMBS professors Marcus Smucker and Marlene Kropf. Between sessions of the yearlong seminar, participants focus on readings, discussions, and both giving and receiving spiritual direction.

"The seminar helped me do the real work of being a pastor—which is helping people pay attention to God," Arthur Boers said. He is pastor of Bloomingdale Mennonite Church, Bloomingdale, Ont., and was a participant in the 1996-97 seminar.

Mary Mae Schwartzentruber, currently interim conference minister for the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, also a 1996-97 participant, appreciated the opportunities to learn about the variety of written materials on spiritual guidance. Having supervision from the AMBS faculty as she gave spiritual guidance to others was also helpful.

"It's important as a pastor to help other people become more aware of how God is moving in their lives," Mary Mae said. "The seminar helped me to be more able to name that for myself and thus to be more able to help others notice when God is working in their lives and relationships."

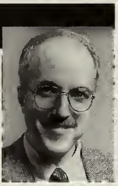
The seminar also helped Mary Mae in working with groups of people, such as a congregation. "To help the community to recognize God's work is as important to me as to help individuals to do this."

During 1998-99, AMBS will again offer the Spiritual Guidance Seminar, beginning in June. For information, contact the AMBS continuing education office: bsawatzky@ambs.edu or 1+800 962-2627.

Linda Nafziger-Meiser and Kwangshik Kim study a Bible passage in the course, Mission and Peace: The Church in the World. The combination of coursework, worship, internships, and community life, along with many kinds of resources for spiritual growth all contribute as students grow in ministry.

Photo by Mary E. Klassen

President's Window



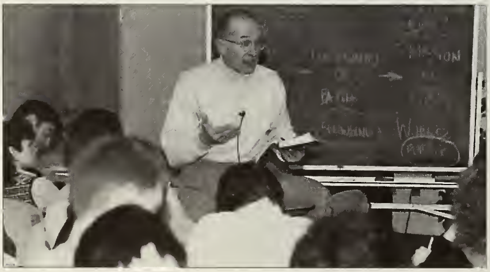
There is hunger for God today in North American society, an openness to the divine that brings wonderful opportunities for speaking and living the gospel. But two concerns come to mind as I observe a growing spirituality trend in society and church.

Our culture is so security-driven that we might limit ourselves to spiritual disciplines that reinforce self-fulfillment rather than those that prepare us for costly witness, Sermon-on-the-Mount value choices, and risk-taking. I can testify that spiritual direction (one-to-one mentoring) can be part of a foundation-shaking encounter with God. Solitude and journaling can generate life-giving conversation with the Creator. Retreats and fasting can open a door to winds of the Spirit. But all of these practices also could be mere inward-looking exercises in self-improvement and navel-gazing.

An emphasis on technique and borrowing from other traditions could instill the notion that Christianity is simply one brand name in a supermarket of religions. Diane Winston, in *Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 16), notes that in Western society there is an "escalating interest in eclectic, trans-cultural spirituality." That means mix-and-match religion. On North American campuses, the author says, students are exploring native American religions, Jewish spirituality, Buddhist meditation and Oriental medicine-and are putting together their own concoction of beliefs.

Jesus once took his disciples on a spiritual retreat and asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ." Jesus followed immediately with instructions for his disciples to "take up their cross daily and follow" (Luke 9:18-24). That's not a bad paradigm for spiritual disciplines: they should startle us with the centrality of Christ, give birth to a living relationship with him—and then direct us back into living out the surprising, upside-down, and radical ways of Jesus.

- J. Nelson Kraybill



"Congregations are the only real intergenerational institutions left in America," Dr. Roland Martinson told participants in a January seminar on youth and family ministry. Emphasizing the importance of helping teenagers and young adults identify with the stories of God's people, Martinson said, "You and I are alive at a moment when a single person of vital faith who looks into the face of a teenager as though they are a real person can make a greater difference than ever." *Photo by Mary E. Klassen*

AMBS Panorama

Commencement set

Forty-two students anticipate graduating from AMBS in May. John Neufeld, former president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man., will be the commencement speaker on May 22.

Continuing education opportunities

Diane Zaerr, associate dean for continuing education, announces these upcoming continuing education events:

Partnering with the Suffering Church in Unity and Mission, July 17-18
Cosponsored by Mennonite World Conference and AMBS
Presenters include:
- Larry Miller- MWC Executive Secretary, France
- Mesach Krisetya- MWC President, Indonesia
- Bedru Hussein- MWC Vice-President, Ethiopia
- Fimbo Ganvuze- MWC Executive Committee; Congo
- Milka Rindzinski- *Courier* Editor, Latin America

Pastors' Friendship and Loneliness, November 13-14
Presenters:
- John Hershberger, AMBS adjunct faculty; therapist at Oaklawn
- Diane Zaerr, AMBS associate dean for continuing education

Worship and Mission
July 24-26
Presenters:
- Alan Kreider, Ph.D., and Eleanor Kreider, M.Mus.

For information, contact the continuing education office at AMBS, bsawatzky@ambs.edu or 219 296-6207.

Two weekend intensives

During fall 1998, two AMBS courses will be offered in intensive weekend sessions: **Rethinking Mennonite History,** taught by Walter Sawatsky, and **Personal Spirituality** (instructor to be announced).

The courses meet four weekends during the semester. For details, contact the AMBS registrar at registrar@ambs.edu or 1+800 964-2627.

Pastors' Week 1999

Pastors' Week 1999 is scheduled for January 25-28. The theme is **Facing our Fears and Finding a Future.**

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

Editor and designer: Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to Canadian Mennonite, and The Mennonite.

Spring 1998 *Printed in U.S.A.*

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Biblical
Seminary

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familiar and enter a place where God's power is made known.

I returned to my hotel room late that night after our group discussion in South Texas. Soon after 3 a.m. I heard specific directions from the Spirit. One was to dunk my head in the Conestoga River the following week. I was told the mark under my eye would disappear.

Before I had left on this trip, Cheryl, my wife, told me I needed to see a doctor about a mark under my right eye that had been growing larger and inflamed during the previous two years. She was concerned it might be precancerous. Two weeks after I dunked my head in the river on a cold March morning, the mark under my eye had disappeared.

I don't know why I was healed. I do know it required me to believe anew in a God who acts in marvelous and strange ways.

A barrier to faith: The Spirit also directed me to go to a lawyer's office to begin changing my name legally, something I had not planned on doing. I was to do so without using any of our money.

When I told this confident, articulate, white male lawyer of the circumstances of my name change, he sat silent for two minutes, his legal pad balanced on his knees. Finally I said, "Shouldn't you ask me some questions?"

"Oh, yes," he said. "Can I tell this to my wife?" After I said yes, he again sat quiet until I prompted him to take down my address and phone number. He said, "I'm sorry. You just took the wind out of me."

Later, as I struggled in prayer, asking God why the money had not arrived, not really believing it was possible, I kept wondering what the lawyer would think should the money never appear. The day before the first half of the $750 was due, the money had still not come. While at a Damascus Road training in Chicago, I asked a participant to pray for me that I would know what to do next.

The following morning she told me God was asking me to stop saying I could pay the bill from our own funds and boldly declare that God would do as God had said. During that morning's worship, in spite of my reluctance, I told the group that I have learned to depend more on the privileges given me as a white male than on the simple providence and grace God affords. Amid ample and embarrassing tears, I told them I didn't know how but that God would provide the needed funds.

Even though I had named no sum to anyone present in that group, by the end of the day I held the exact amount of money needed to make the first payment. When I gave that money to my lawyer, I enjoined him to spend it well because it had not come from me. Then and when the second payment arrived several months later, on the day before it was due, he had nothing to say.

This process has forced me to think more

White privilege: Those benefits and privileges white people receive solely on the basis of their skin color.

'You're doing the right thing'

After falling asleep on the night of Oct. 20, 1996, Jody Miller Shearer found himself conscious in a light, airy room. He was aware of spiritual beings he now calls angels. He heard a voice say, "You're doing the right thing," which he knew was a reference to his anti-racism work.

When he felt the vision slipping away, he grabbed one of the angels and said, "You can't come and say these things without leaving a sign." He felt the angel's hand reach out and touch him in the middle of the chest. A warm feeling spread through him, and the chest pains he had been feeling over the previous week went away.

Tobin Miller Shearer

Not until a day later did he tell Cheryl, his wife, about this experience. Over the next 10 days, he described the vision to a small group of friends he trusted to say what they thought—including whether or not he had "gone over the edge." They all encouraged him not to dismiss the vision but to listen for what else God had to say as he went on a spiritual retreat he had already planned.

During the retreat he became more aware of how much the disappointment and struggle of working to dismantle racism had taken a toll on him. He realized how much he needed God's presence at the center of his work and how tempting it is to give in to the rage and despair that often threatens to overwhelm him.

The next morning he woke up knowing he had been given a new name. The new name, Tobin, would not leave him. He spent the next month talking with Cheryl, his pastor, his parents and trusted friends and colleagues. The majority said, "Take this name seriously. Make it public." Of particular importance to him was the affirmation he received from the African-American and Hispanic friends and colleagues with whom he works most closely.

On Jan. 4, 1997, in a simple ceremony at his church, he accepted the name Tobin as a testimony to God's faithfulness, as a reminder of his need to rely on God and as a public recommitment to the vocation of anti-racism.

Since then he has discovered that Tobin is a Hebrew name meaning "a gift from God." On Nov. 25, 1997, he appeared before a judge to tell this story and made the name change legal.

His friend Dody Matthias said to Tobin's sons during the naming ceremony, "Your dad forgot that God is always with him. God had to send an angel to make him aware again of God's presence. Now whenever anyone calls him Tobin, he will be reminded that God goes with him, that God goes with us all." *—Based on "A Word from God: 'I Will Change Your Name'" by Tobin Miller Shearer, in* Christian Living *(March, 1998)*

I have learned to depend more on the privileges given me as a white male than on the simple providence and grace God affords.—*Tobin Miller Shearer*

about the cost of racism on the Mennonite church as a whole and on white people in particular. Even as I continue to discover the many ways I rely more on white privilege and power than I do on God's providence, I wonder about this barrier to a closer walk with God. I will not be surprised to discover that these privileges are inhibiting our collective ministry and witness in the world.

Where from here? I believe God is trying to shake loose our grip on an ordered, safe, rational, wealthy, white-controlled church. Whether or not my personal journey provides some direction for that process is not important. What is important is that God's leading renewal and power be fully present in this time of change.

Tobin Miller Shearer works for Mennonite Central Committee U.S. in Akron, Pa.

Why use the term anti-racism?

by Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer

For the past four years, we have used a term over and over again to describe the work of Damascus Road: anti-racism. Throughout that time questioners have come to us, some curious, others antagonistic, some simply puzzled, asking, "Why do you use such a negative term?"

Now that 25 Damascus Road teams are actively pursuing an anti-racist vision within the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ family of churches, some explanation of that word choice seems in order.

What would bring someone like Jeanine Jordan, a mother, small-business entrepreneur and member of Fairhaven Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., to say, "Anti-racism feels necessary, feels like hard work, feels like a call … feels worthwhile"? What would cause Phil Bergey, Franconia Conference coordinator, to add, "This is hard work and it is slow. But it is exactly this to which we are called"?

We are engaged in a profound act of creation in the midst of dismantling what would destroy us all.

Why we use "anti-racism":

1. It's positive. Sometimes it seems to us that people are objecting more to "racism" than to "anti." If you have a negative word, racism, and you say you're against it, that's one of the most positive things we know.

2. It's Anabaptist. We come from a proud anti-war tradition and a much-heralded commitment to conscientious objection. Anti-racism stems from that same tradition of engaging the powers and principalities, of saying no and no again to the forces that keep us bound.

3. It's accurate. Unlike the terms "prejudice reduction" or "diversity training," anti-racism refers to a specific task. This involves changing systems and institutions that maintain white power and privilege and perpetuate internalized oppression among people of color. We don't need to be trained to be diverse. We are diverse. If all we ever do is reduce prejudice, we'll never get rid of it. Reducing prejudice only changes the way people talk and act in the presence of the "other." It doesn't change the systems.

4. It's realistic. While we continue to be excited and grateful for the work of those Damascus Road teams actively working within our churches, conferences, colleges, mission agencies and denominational bodies, we are aware we have a long journey ahead of us. We are not yet able to articulate what that community built on anti-racist commitments will look like. The "new community," "racial justice," "racial reconciliation" all hold parts of the vision, but none is yet complete. We're faced with a semantic gap between the terminology we'll discover someday and the reality we are faced with now.

5. It's hopeful. We use the term anti-racism because it reminds us again and again what we're struggling against. We are engaged in a profound act of creation in the midst of dismantling what would destroy us all. In that struggle, we find strong hope.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer work for Mennonite Central Committee U.S. on anti-racism issues.

Writing the invisible presence

by Rhonda Langley

RNS photo

I.

The highway rises
wet
under the heat
and we speed over it
past rows of vines
and peach trees breaking
under their weight

and then the junk yard in Parlier,
the river,
a billboard pointing toward McDonalds.

How it all points toward something, I think,
because we are going to Reedley
to visit J.B. Toews,
scholar, theologian,
patriarch of the Mennonite Brethren Church,
born in the Ukraine in 1905,
who, escaping from the revolution,
drove tractor in Canada for two and a half years
then preached and taught until,
at ninety-two,
he sits now in Reedley
at Palm Village Retirement Center
and welcomes visitors.

He takes his hearing aid
from the drawer
as we come in
and tells how,
in Rotterdam,
after pacing the sea all day,
he sat at midnight
under the monument to William of Orange
and knew there was a God.

And I am thinking
how young I am—
younger than the Russian underground,
than my ancestors' graves,
younger than the tilled earth.
Young like an orb weaver
crawling from the sac
to blow wherever the wind
might take me.

"In community, conception gels,"
J.B. is telling my husband,
theologian to theologian.

And I find that my eyes have wandered
to the picture over the bed.

I recognize it.
The Road to Emmaus.

II.

Sipping lemon water
at the Java Cafe
Delbert tells us
about J.B. baptizing
in the Kings River,
the congregation standing
on the shore.

How the curious Mexicans
stood watching,
one woman right up front
dropping her swimsuit strap
to nurse a baby.

How after that
the baptistery was built
in the church
for theological reasons.

And then the moon rising
over Tower Theater
reminds him
of a French poem
written by a Dutchman
he met in Vietnam
during his years with Mennonite Central Committee.

Marge sits beside him
looking into a cup of cafe latte

dark like the river,
like the eyes of the Mexican woman,
watching.

III.

At church
Jean is writing on her bulletin
across the aisle from me,
writing words for a poem
maybe.

Writing about us.

Writing the invisible presence.

How when we sing,
where the cages of our lungs had been
a river rushes
deeply through us all.

Rhonda Langley lives in Manhattan, N.Y.

Hesston team honored for academic success

HESSTON, Kan.—Hesston College's 1997 volleyball team has been named to the National Junior College Athletic Association's (NJCAA) list of academic teams of the year.

As a team, the Larks earned a grade point average of 3.35 on a 4.0 scale, placing them eighth in the nation. The NJCAA honored 21 teams with GPAs of 3.0 and above.

Hesston took second at the NJCAA Division III national tournament in November, finishing the season with a 29-18 record.

Question #5:

"Is there any advantage to driving a buggy instead of a car?"

20Q For the answer, visit "20Q," our new imaginative museum at The People's Place. Based on the "20 Most Asked Questions About the Amish and Mennonites."

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Bethel College names academic dean

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—John K. Sheriff, who had been serving as Bethel College's interim acting dean since last summer, has been appointed to the position permanently. He succeeds Wynn Goering.

Sheriff has been a member of the Bethel English faculty since 1967. He has a bachelor's degree from Greenville (Ill.) College, a master's degree from the University of Illinois and a doctorate from the University of Oklahoma.

Pennsylvania canners reach anniversary goal

CHAMBERSBURG, Pa.—It took five long, intense days, but more than 300 volunteers successfully celebrated a quarter-century of Mennonite Central Committee meat canning in Chambersburg by processing 25,188 cans of beef March 10-14.

The organizing committee had set a goal of 25,000 cans in commemoration of the 25th anniversary. But it did not come easily. First came a shortage of beef, followed by mechanical difficulties with the canner. But both problems were solved.

"People really rose to the occasion," says canning committee chair Glenn Showalter. "We knew it was going to take a third more of what we did last year, … but we didn't know if we could do it unless we tried."

The committee plans to reduce next year's output to 20,000 cans.—*MCC News Service*

Foundation to pick up outreach ministries

HARRISONBURG, Va.—An Anabaptist-related media outreach organization will assume responsibility for two activities handled by Mennonite Board of Missions' Mennonite Media department.

Starting April 15, Shalom Foundation will produce and distribute customized outreach desk calendars and postcards with congregational information. Mennonite Media had been making the materials available for the past decade but has made changes in the organization's priorities.

Shalom Foundation, based in Harrisonburg and Grottoes, Va., produces *Together* and *Living* quarterly periodicals.—*MBM News Service*

Workers

Benner, Scott was licensed as associate pastor of youth and young adults at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., on March 15.
Bergstresser, Deron was licensed as associate pastor of contemporary worship at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., on March 15.
Musselman, Elizabeth was licensed as associate pastor of pastoral care at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., on March 15.

Births

Beiler, Heather Faye, March 13, to Beverly (Showalter) and David Beiler, Kinzers, Pa.
Brubaker, Julian Samuel Graybill, March 12, to Paul Brubaker and Beth Graybill, Lancaster, Pa.
Buckwalter, Thea Leann Brown, March 7, to Andrea Brown and Tim Buckwalter, Lancaster, Pa.
Buhr, Molly Marie, March 12, to Burl and Rena (King) Buhr, Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Erbaugh, Lydia Janelle, March 18, to Doug and Gail Erbaugh, West Point, Va.
Lacan, Carmen Patricia, March 17, to Darla (Bradley) and José Lacan, Elkhart, Ind.
Lamberton, Abigale Annilee and Forrest William (twins), Feb. 12, to Annisa and Tony Lamberton, Pawlet, Vt.
Longenecker, Collin Benjamin, Feb. 3, to Kevin and Shelby (Bauman) Longenecker, Harrisonburg, Va.
Martin, Jannah Larissa, Feb. 1, to Gloria (Wenger) and Jay Martin, Ephrata, Pa.
Miller, Andrew Ryan, March 3, to Scott and Suzanne (Reeves) Miller, Gulfport, Miss.
Miller, Daniel Edward, Oct. 13, to Kent and Pearl (Esch) Miller, Belleville, Pa.
Miller, Marcia Christine, March 11, to David and Tina (Foley) Miller, Canton, Ohio.
Neufeld, Greta Marie, March 21, to Dave Neufeld and Donna Stoltzfus, Lancaster, Pa.
Stoltzfus, James Edward Lapp, March 7, to Cynthia Lapp and Eric Stoltzfus, Hyattsville, Md.
Wanner, Addison Richard, March 12, to Brett and Marilyn Landis-Wanner, Reamstown, Pa.
Zaerr, Ethan Marlin, March 7, to Elaine and Ron Zaerr, Archbold, Ohio.

Marriages

Bauman/Foltz: Nicole Bauman, Harrisonburg, Va., and Jimmy Foltz, Harrisonburg, Jan. 3, by Lee Ebersole and John Kibunger.
Clark/Nofziger: Tiffany Clark, Columbus, Ohio, and Jeffrey Nofziger, Plain City, Ohio, Feb. 14, by Howard Schmitt.
Comardelle/Holliman: Christopher Comardelle, Pass Christian, Miss., and Mellisa Holliman, Perkinston, Miss., March 14, by David Kniss.
Crocker/Kagele: Colleen Crocker, Spokane, Wash., and Dennis Kagele, Ritzville, Wash., March 7, by Duncan Smith.
Kauffman/Shenk: Everett Kauffman, Harrisonburg, Va., and Brenda Shenk, Harrisonburg, March 7, by Lee Ebersole, John Kiblinger and Marian Buckwalter.
Manuel/Shrock: Kelly Manuel, Conneaut Lake, Pa., and Douglas Shrock, Conneaut Lake, Feb. 14, by Gordon Myers.
Eby/Weaver: Nancy Nauman Eby, Lititz, Pa., and Floyd Weaver, Ephrata, Pa., Feb. 28, by Jay Weaver.
Rempel/Weaver: Marcia Rempel, Newton, Kan., and John Weaver, Hartville, Ohio, Jan. 3, by Joe Yoder.

Deaths

Kreider, Elda L. Hostetler, 82, Seymour, Ind., died March 8. Survivors: husband, Don; children Eldon, Leo, Dierra Lehman, Donna Zehr, Kay, Loretta; 10 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Cremated.
Lamberton, Forrest William, newborn, Pawlet, Vt., died Feb. 12. Survivors: parents, Annisa and Tony Lamberton; sister, Abigale. Burial: March 3 at Vermont by James Musser.
Roth, Grace Boshart, 84, Wayland, Iowa, died March 8. Survivors: husband, Lester; children Jim, LaVonne Mullet, Joyce Sandersfeld; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: March 13 at Wayland by Ruben Chupp and Colen Richard.
Saylor, Mabel Wenger Ristenbatt, 72, Manheim, Pa., died March 9. Survivors: husband, William; children David Ristenbatt, Ruth Burkholder; stepson, Jesse Saylor; five grandchildren; four stepgrandchildren. Burial: March 14 at Lititz, Pa., by Dennis Ernest.
Shank, Reba Heatwole, 83, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 3 of lung cancer. Survivors: children Stanley, Jay; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Memorial service March 8 by Dwight Heatwole and Dan Longenecker.
Summers, Raymond W., 94, Goshen, Ind., died March 9. Survivors: wife, Edna; children Kathryn Sherer, Robert; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: March 13 at Goshen by Firman Gingerich and Nancy Kauffmann.

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Weber, Roy R., 51, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 20 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Connie; children Sarah, Michael; parents, Raymond and Betty Jean Weber. Burial: Feb. 24 at Newton by Clarence Rempel and Verney Unruh.

Wenger, Edna K., 83, Leola, Pa., died March 9. Burial: March 14 at Leola, by Tim Herr, Bonnie Stutzman and Warren Good.

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Classifieds

Penn Foundation, a private behavioral health-care facility affiliated with Mennonite Health Services, seeks fee-for-service ***psychiatrist*** to perform initial evaluations and medication reviews. Located in scenic Upper Bucks County, 40 miles north of Philadelphia, our diversified community-oriented practice serves suburban-rural areas of Sellersville, Newtown and Langhorne. Our multidisciplinary staff includes eight staff psychiatrists. Services include a comprehensive outpatient and partial hospital, 26-bed inpatient unit with active consultation service and 27-bed inpatient substance abuse treatment center. Board certification and experience with adults and children preferred.

Please send CV to Vernon H. Kratz, M.D., Penn Foundation, P.O. Box 32, Sellersville, PA 18960; 215-257-6551. EOE

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following positions for the 1998-99 school year: ***social studies/personal finance instructor*** (85 percent time with benefits), one-year position; ***guidance counselor*** (50 percent time).

Send resume to Ronald L. Hertzler, acting principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446.

Pleasant Hill Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, celebrates their ***40th anniversary*** May 16-17, 1998. If planning to attend, call 306-382-6585.

Mennonite Health Services seeks an individual for ***executive leadership*** of health-care services in a rural community. Services include acute care, outpatient services, long-term care. Expansion with assisted living is planned. The position requires expertise with health-care operations, assessment and planning, and communication with internal and community constituents. The not-for-profit system is in a community with strong church presence.

Send confidential inquires and/or resume to MHS, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526; fax 219-534-3254.

OrrVilla Retirement Community, Orrville, Ohio, seeks ***executive director***. Responsibilities include overall program, financial and staff management, maintaining relations with the church and local community and providing leadership and vision to a growing retirement community. Qualifications include organizational, communication, human resource and financial management skills.

Send confidential inquiries and/or resume to Morris Stutzman, president, 2171-B Eagle Pass, Wooster, OH 44691.

Mennonite Board of Missions: ***Service Adventure leaders*** needed in Norristown, Pa.; Champaign, Ill., and South Bend, Ind. Service Adventure is an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2- month service-learning program for young adults ages 17 to 20. Leadership experience, interest in young adults, spiritual discernment and conflict resolution skills are desired. Minimum age 24. Two-year term. Accepting applications now for terms beginning fall 1998.

Information: Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, 219-294-7523; email Kent@mbm.org.

Goshen College invites energetic and creative applicants for the position of ***director of admissions***, to begin July 1, 1998. The director is responsible for managing all components of the recruitment and admissions functions, providing leadership for professional and support staff and meeting annual and longer-range goals for new student enrollment. The position requires leadership, communication, administrative, organizational and management skills. Responsibilities include acting on applications for admission; developing effective recruitment plan; conducting recruitment-related research; overseeing appropriate development and use of information technology and database management; creating and managing annual budget; providing for staff hiring, training, professional development and evaluation, and assisting in the creation of recruitment materials. Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred. Admissions experience preferred; related administrative experience required. Belief in Goshen College's mission and a conviction for Mennonite higher education are essential.

Send letter of application, resume and names of four references to Richard Gerig, vice president for enrollment, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7508; fax 219-535-7060; e-mail: richlg@goshen.edu. Though review of applications will begin April 15, applications will be accepted until the position is filled. An affirmative action employer, Goshen College is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Faculty members are expected to share that commitment. Applications are encouraged through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu.

by Rich Preheim

Broken trust among Friends

The Religious Society of Friends' reputation for integrity and honesty is so profound that the church's name can be found on cereal labels. After all, what could be as wholesome as Quaker Oats?

But that image has been tarnished as the head of a now-defunct Quaker insurance and investment organization awaits sentencing for scamming participants out of at least $14 million, reports *Quaker Life.*

Philip E. Harmon in 1972 was one of the three original trustees of National Friends Insurance Trust, which covered many Quaker pastors and other church workers. After more than 20 years of apparently smooth operation, the trust started crumbling and eventually collapsed in February 1997.

Court records say Harmon and others used trust money "to support luxurious lifestyles," including real estate for personal use and collections of costly hobby cars.

After the collapse, Friends United Meeting, the largest Quaker denomination, was left without insurance coverage for eight months last year and voluntarily paid more than $35,000 for unpaid claims.

Harmon and his dealings had been under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service and other agencies since 1996. He pleaded guilty last October to conspiracy and fraud charges and faces the possibility of eight years in prison.

In a column in the March issue of *Quaker Life,* Friends United Meeting general secretary Johan Maurer admits the denomination did not ask important questions of the trust's operation. "Some of these questions might have headed off temptations which may have derailed [Harmon and his associates] off their ethical tracks," he writes.

A secret mission in China

The ends apparently do not justify the means for the China Christian Council.

Even though it means more mission work in China, the CCC has criticized a Southern Baptist Convention mission strategy as deceptive and "clandestine" and says it will not cooperate with such efforts. "We have followed the principle that all church work and Christian activity in China should be open, honest and aboveboard, and thus consistent with the teachings of the Bible," writes CCC president Wenzao Han in the organization's Amity News Service.

According to Amity, the Southern Baptist Convention, which had been working with the CCC, has initiated a second approach: secretly sending workers to China without divulging their identities to either the CCC or the government.

"We cannot ... give legitimacy to secret infiltration," Han writes. "This is in violation of our principles and of our Christian teachings."

Party down because Christ has risen

The festive folks at United Methodist Church of Mantua, N.J., know how to party.

The congregation threw quite a bash last spring in observance of Holy Humor Sunday, according to the Fellowship of Merry Christian's *The Joyful Noiseletter.* The organization has again this year designated the first Sunday after Easter (April 19) as Holy Humor Sunday to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Among United Methodist's activities last year:

- The congregation sang "If You're Happy and You Know It."
- Instead of a sermon, congregants shared jokes and stories.
- Ushers wore colorful "Cat in the Hat" hats and used them to collect the offering.
- At the pastor's suggestion, many people came dressed in bright or comical attire.

Waiting for righteousness

The famous German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer opposed Adolf Hitler and his persecution of the Jews and eventually was executed at a German concentration camp. So, Stephen Wise wants to know, why isn't Bonhoeffer recognized for his efforts by a Holocaust memorial?

The Yad Vashem in Jerusalem commemorates both the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and the "Righteous Gentiles" who risked their lives to save Jews. Among the 13,000 so honored are Raoul Wallenberg, Oskar Schindler, Corrie Ten Boom and Andre Trocme.

But Wise, writing in *Christian Century,* is baffled at the omission of Bonhoeffer. Wise documents a variety of Bonhoeffer's efforts in support of the Jews: public addresses, involvement in an underground seminary ("Only he who cries out for the Jews can sing Gregorian chants," he told students), international advocacy, a rescue of Jews deported for the "final solution," even his controversial role in an attempt to assassinate Hitler.

"The Nazi outrages against the Jews led him increasingly to review old doctrine, to speak out against the church and then to take action against the government," Wise writes. "Bonhoeffer's words and actions entitle him to a place in the pantheon of the Righteous at Yad Vashem."

© 1990 Fellowship of Merry Christians

Jack Jewell's "The Risen Christ by the Sea" features a beaming Messiah who has gotten the last laugh on Satan. The picture is also the logo for the Fellowship of Merry Christians.

Two-thirds of respondents in a recent survey said they intentionally try different activities to develop their personal spirituality. Among the activities tried were

- Read the Bible (44 percent)
- Attend church (43 percent)
- Pray to God (38 percent)
- Spend time with family and friends (11 percent)
- Meditate (6 percent)
- Be a good person (5 percent)
- Spend time in nature (2 percent)
- Exercise (2 percent)

The survey was commissioned by Tyndale House Publishers and Zondervan Publishing House.

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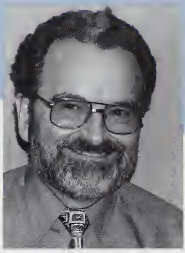

J. Lorne Peachey

What we've heard so far

Eight weeks ago the first issue of this magazine came off the press. In that issue, I invited readers to respond and critique this weekly publication that looks toward a new, integrated Mennonite Church.

You responded, oh, how you responded (see below). For the most part what you had to say was positive—aside from a few exceptions like the couple that angrily canceled their subscription because they hadn't had a chance to vote on integration or this integrated magazine.

So far, the critiques and suggestions have clustered around these issues:

- **For the Record:** By far the most letters and emails had something to say about births, marriages and deaths. Some readers questioned this practice. The majority voiced their thanks or pleaded with us not even to consider removing these from the magazine. We're not.
- **Legibility:** "Maybe it's because I'm older, but I find your magazine hard to read." How many letters used that sentence! Our response: No, it's not age. The combination of body type, paper and printing process has not worked out as we had hoped. We're working on a new typeface, possibly using it by early May—once we're sure it will indeed make the publication easier to read.
- **Paper:** Shiny paper, that is. Why do we use it? When it glares so much? And it must be difficult to recycle.

The paper we're using is known in the trade as matte-coated stock. We chose it because we want *The Mennonite* to be more than just a way for writers to communicate. Works by photographers, artists and graphic designers appear better on this kind of paper.

It does have a bit of a shine. We think, however, a new type face will take care of the shiny paper problem. If not, we'll look at the paper stock again.

Recyclability? This paper is made up of 30 percent post-consumer waste, i.e., paper that's already been used. By contrast, *The Mennonite*'s two predecessors used paper with 20 percent or less recycled fibers. So now we're actually more environmentally friendly. And this publication can be recycled again.

Except, perhaps, not in Japan. I'm still not sure what to tell the reader in that country who sent an email saying he found the new *The Mennonite* difficult to burn.

But thank you to this reader—and to all who wrote. I hope you will continue to do so. *The Mennonite* is still very much a work in process. We will keep tweaking and changing to make this the best communication piece possible to serve the church.—*jlp*

The Mennonite is still very much a work in process. We will keep tweaking and changing to make this the best communication piece possible to serve the church.

And readers keep right on saying

One of the biggest surprises for me with this new publication has been reader response. In the first eight issues, we've printed 115 letters in Readers Say. Close to a third of these were critiques and comments on the magazine (see above). Most of the rest were about content.

As editor, I'm grateful for this kind of response. It helps me know the pulse of the church as well as to understand what readers want and need. But I must also confess the number of letters and emails has forced me to change two of my goals.

One was to guarantee publication of every letter we receive for Readers Say—unless it's anonymous, attacks a person (instead of that person's ideas) or is incoherent. But with limited space and our volume of mail, this guarantee is no longer possible. So far we have not kept out a letter because of space, but we may need to do so in the future. We're working on the criteria by which we'll make our choices.

Another of my goals has been to acknowledge all the letters and emails that we receive. But I returned recently from one week of work out of the office to find 50 letters for publication, half again that number not for print and 12 manuscripts on my desk. Then I realized that this goal too will have to go.

In the future, letters and emails for Readers Say will likely not be acknowledged. If you send one to us for that purpose, you can assume it will appear—unless we've already printed several letters on the subject, you've had another letter printed in the previous two months or your letter deals with a subject unrelated to the magazine or to the church.

The Mennonite continues to welcome all letters. Those submitted for publication we will do our best to get into Readers Say. Those not for publication we'll read and digest, responding if we can.

As editor I find it a real challenge to get more mail than I can handle. But I can also think of much worse!—*jlp*

the Mennonite

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music: to charm or to inflame?

4 CPT receives second death threat

8 It's only rock 'n' roll . . . but can I like it?

10 Jazz in church? Unfamiliar territory

16 'When they had sung the hymn'

The ***Mennonite*** **welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say,** ***The Mennonite*****, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors***

Possibilities of service

Thank you for your observant, accurate article on missions in Haiti (*The Mennonite,* March 24). I lived in the Dominican Republic last summer as a part of Goshen (Ind.) College's SST program. While there, our group spent four days in Haiti. We observed several mission projects, heard Haitian and North American speakers and saw the "poverty" that so many American aid companies seek to eradicate. Our guides were a former Mennonite Central Committee worker and a Haitian pastor, so we were able to hear a running commentary about what we were seeing.

There are an unbelievable number of short-term mission trips to Haiti, all with seemingly good intentions. When asked about these projects, however, our guides said, "If only they would spend these weeks learning about our country, understanding how we live." It seems that in our North American attitude of "doing something" and "serving" others, we eliminate the possibilities to learn from our Haitian neighbors. Why not send our youth groups on trips to Haiti with the intention of learning about the culture? Youth could live with families, interact with Haitians and actively share and receive parts of the two cultures. The results would not be as obvious as building churches or handing out food, but the changes in attitudes concerning poverty, service and worldviews would be life-changing for both parties involved.—*Rachel A. Eash, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.*

Agreeing with Gwen

Thank you, J. Lorne Peachey, for your open letter to your niece (*The Mennonite,* March 10). I agree with Gwen that I wouldn't subscribe or read *The Mennonite* if it stopped reporting births, marriages and deaths. These are the first sections I read.—*Angie Lewis, Sturgis, Mich.*

I agree with your niece! Unfortunately, for historical purposes, the death notices omit too much. Most times there are no birth dates, no parents, no spouse maiden names and no siblings. I understand that space is at a premium, but publishing incomplete data is also a waste of space. Maybe there should be a monthly or quarterly publication printed with only the information that is usually included in For the Record but with complete information. —*Thelma L. Martin, Nappanee, Ind.*

As a voluntary service worker in Aibonito, Puerto Rico, from 1965 to 1967, I was part of a rather large unit with workers from many parts of the United States and Canada. I depend on your periodical to keep me informed of special events in the lives of those I met during those years. I would be very disappointed if you discontinued publishing births, marriages and deaths, especially deaths.—*Odette A. Rolon, Archbold, Ohio*

I appreciate the new magazine except for one thing: the shortened obituaries. I keep a family genealogy data base, and I always scan the obituaries for distant relatives whose information I can add. Now that you do not include parents' names, wives' maiden names or even dates of birth, it is almost impossible to positively match them with my data base.

I know the purpose of the obituaries is not to serve family historians as myself, but I wanted you to know that they did indeed serve that purpose (in *Gospel Herald*), and now they cannot.—*Susan Christophel, Morristown, Tenn.*

Polity and discipline

Thanks to the Current Issues Sunday School Class from Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, Kan., for raising concerns about the implications of Mennonite Church area conferences removing congregations over differences on homosexuality (*The Mennonite,* March 10). I'm dismayed by this continuing practice by MC conferences, most recently by South Central Conference with Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan.

Unless we're sure we know the final word on the ethical, biblical, spiritual, emotional dimensions of homosexuality, can we not make room for honest differences in this area? Is there no room to consider more data and to hear real people who deal with these issues?

The message these removals sends to gay and lesbian people and to their families and friends is that the die is cast and there is no place for them in the church unless they live in a closet. Is this the stance that the new Mennonite Church will take?—*Eldon Epp, Manhattan, Kan.*

When I read that a congregation has been voted out of the conference, I hurt deeply. After journeying through life for 90 years, my understanding of Jesus is he would not vote out people. Children were unimportant in the culture of Jesus' day, but he blessed them "for such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mark 10:14). Jesus befriended women who were considered property and had to endure abuse. He saved the life of a woman about to be stoned for adultery, asking her accusers who of them was

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features

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... but can I like it? It depends.

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One Mennonite's perspective

10 **Christ: human and divine**
We so often add something to make Christ more appealing.

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say readers say

without sin so they would qualify to throw the first stone. Jesus came upon Zaccheus up in a tree. Zaccheus had a bad reputation, but Jesus said he was coming to his house. When Jesus chose his disciples, he did not call the famous. He called ordinary folks.

Our process of General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church integration must rest upon larger and deeper scriptural roots than a quick interpretation of a few Scriptures. Maybe some questions and issues need to wait for eternity rather than for human judgment here on earth.—*David C. Wedel, North Newton, Kan.*

If our churches exclude homosexuals in covenanted life partnerships, then it behooves us also to exclude people who are unrepentant of other sinful activities.

Militaristic behavior is wrong (Luke 6:27-36 and Matthew 26:47-56). This type of sin can take the form of working for a company which produces guns and bombs for lethal use. Materialistic behavior also is condemned (Matthew 6:19-24 and 19:16-30). Owning a $40,000 luxury automobile can be a sin of this type. Ignoring the material/physical needs of neighbors has dire consequences (Matthew 25:31-46 and Luke 16:19-31). The name of a person who fails repeatedly to contribute to the local food pantry or Mennonite Central Committee would not appear on the church membership list. Jesus also uses strong language to confront hypocritical behavior (Matthew 7:1-5 and 23:1-4). And the list of sins could continue.

If we Mennonites are serious about making church membership contingent on moral/ethical purity, then we need to exclude all people who do not meet all standards set forth in the Scriptures. There should be no exceptions. —*Brent A. Koehn, Arlington, Texas*

MOUNT JOY, Pa.—People suffer from insufficient nutrition and substandard conditions in foreign countries and big cities. But in rural Lancaster (Pa.) County?

When Mount Joy Mennonite Church members surveyed their community, they found many people barely getting by: elderly retirees, single mothers, divorced fathers, even some two-parent families.

So as part of the Living in Faithful Evangelism process, Mount Joy members in 1993 started Helping Hands. Twice a month they host about 50 people in the church fellowship hall to share prayer concerns, have a meal and enjoy fellowship. A member of the Mount Joy pastoral team joins the dinner, discreetly checking on those who have psychological and social needs. A nurse offers check-ups once a month.

Helping Hands is not funded directly by the congregation but is supported by Mount Joy members. *—Lancaster Conference News*

CPT receives second death threat

Security stepped up but work remains unchanged

CHICAGO, Ill.—For the second time in less than two months, Christian Peacemaker Teams has received a death threat, apparently in connection with CPT's work in the West Bank city of Hebron.

In an April 5 message left on the organization's Chicago headquarters answering machine, a caller identifying himself as from the Israeli Consulate said "intelligence teams" in Chicago are "gonna kill you" if CPT continued its unnamed "anti-Semitic activities."

Bob Schwartz, spokesperson for the Israeli Consulate in Chicago, says he "can't conceive of anyone here" making the threat. "We certainly have no ill will against [CPT]," he says.

In mid-January, CPT's Chicago office received email and telephone messages accusing three CPT workers in Hebron of assisting Arab terrorists. They set a deadline for the three members to leave or their "lives will be in jeopardy." The messages were attributed to Kach, a former Israeli political party now outlawed and classified as a terrorist organization by the U.S. and Israeli governments.

The latest threat did not mention CPT's work in Hebron, which continues. No workers were evacuated after the January threat. CPT has been in Hebron since June 1995.

Authorities are looking into the April incident, including the possible connection with the January threat. Both the January and April phone messages came at midday on Sundays and were left by men with Israeli accents.

"It may be related to the January threat," says CPT member Wendy Lehman. "It's hard to tell if it's the same voice [in both phone calls]."

While CPT isn't changing its work, after two death threats "we're being more aware," Lehman says. Volunteers are now serving as "door greeters," keeping watch on traffic flow at the building housing CPT's office.*—Rich Preheim*

700 people recall 50 years of VS work

LANCASTER, Pa.—More than 700 people visited an exhibit commemorating 50 years of Eastern Mennonite Missions' (EMM) Voluntary Service (VS) program during Lancaster Conference's annual meeting March 22.

The exhibit covered 2,400 square feet of the Lancaster Mennonite High School gym. EMM is ending the VS program this year. More than 3,000 people have participated in VS and Summer VS programs since 1943.

The program's five decades of work were depicted in a variety of ways. Visitors to the exhibit's 1940s section "met" the late Raymond Charles, the man credited with sparking the vision for EMM VS. He died in 1988. In the 1950s display, children made paper hats with EMM staffers portraying VS workers at Redlands Migrant Labor Camp in Homestead, Fla. The 1960s display was a replica of Glad Tidings Sandwich Shop in New York City, which sold 25¢ ham sandwiches, chips and soda.

Another section contained computers where visitors could search a database of former VS workers and find current volunteer opportunities.*—Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Beth Hollinger, portraying an EMM Voluntary Service worker in Florida in the 1950s, helps Jason Boll of Manheim, Pa., make a paper boat during a celebration of VS's 50-year history.

For MCC workers, Christian-Muslim dialogue shatters stereotypes, strengthens faith

GAZA CITY, Gaza—Any new Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment requires adjustments. Ask James Wheeler, who teaches English in a Palestinian—and exclusively Muslim—refugee camp, where one of his first classrooms was above a mosque.

"I started the class in midafternoon and had been teaching awhile, and then suddenly there was the call to prayer—not in the distance but two floors below," Wheeler recalls. "And everyone gets up and leaves to go pray."

But there have been more profound challenges. "I came with many of the negative stereotypes we in the West have of Islam," says Wheeler, from Lancaster, Pa. "But these have begun to disappear as I've worked with people and developed friendships."

An MCC priority in the Middle East has been to work alongside Muslims to learn more about them and their faith. Wheeler last August became the first MCC worker to be placed with an Islamic organization.

"It's a very obvious thing to do," says Patty Shelly, who directs MCC activities in the West Bank. "If we're interested in and committed to being in touch with people from the region and with Palestinians, then we'll be in contact with Islamic organizations who work with welfare issues for Palestinians."

Says Linda Herr, Wheeler's wife and the MCC administrator in the Gaza Strip: "There's a fear in the West about working with Muslims. We want to counter the negative image of Islam in Western media and popular culture."

Muslims also have stereotypes of the West, such as the belief that Westerners think the worst of Muslims. A Muslim woman once joked that surely Herr was afraid of her because her face was covered and therefore she must be a terrorist.

Wheeler tells of walking with a bearded Muslim friend. Many Muslim men grow beards for religious reasons. "I asked him about it," Wheeler says. "He said, 'You probably think I'm religious, but I'm not. It's just a beard.'

"I asked him if he prayed five times a day, and he said yes. So I wanted to know what it meant to be religious if he wasn't. He told me that being religious means you have a beard, wear certain clothes and hate America."

Honest communication is crucial in Christian-Muslim dialogue, Herr and Wheeler say. "When we went into Iran, we said, 'We're a Christian organization and we'd like visas,' " Herr says. "And they said, 'Thank you very much for telling us and here are your visas.' They were denying visas to secular organizations because they weren't sure what their intentions really were.

"This has challenged us to be more articulate about our faith. The best witness is through love, compassion, partnership and complete transparency."

MCC has been questioned for placing workers with Islamic organizations. But Wheeler says working in an exclusively Muslim setting has strengthened his Christian faith.

"I have to ask myself the question daily, 'What do I believe?' " he says. "It's much different from when I was in a Christian community and could take my faith for granted. Islam will measure the depth of our Christian commitment and give it new meaning."—*Melanie Zuercher for MCC News Service*

It's much different from when I was in a Christian community and could take my faith for granted.

—James Wheeler

Seminary to get $1 million for new pastoral program

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Thanks to a $1 million commitment from a Timberville, Va., couple, Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) will admit students to a new clinical pastoral education (CPE) program as early as fall 1999.

The Eastern Mennonite University board of trustees approved the program at its March 14 meeting. It becomes only the third seminary-run CPE program in the country and the first on the East Coast.

Long-term funding for the program will come from an endowment established by Norman E. and Lena B. Yutzy. Norman Yutzy pastored congregations in Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Virginia. He is an EMS alumnus and participated in a CPE program at Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary.

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

The "quiet in the land" aren't nearly so quiet anymore. That was the top story in the March 30 *Chicago Tribune,* which has the nation's seventh largest daily circulation. A *Tribune* reporter and photographer visited the Illinois Conference assembly March 27-29 at Sonido de Alabanza, one of six Hispanic Mennonite congregations in Chicago. The *Tribune* reported a service of "electric salsa and high-decibel, bilingual evangelism, building to a Pentecostal-style climax." The article went on to describe "an explosion of growth among urban minorities and their exuberant style of worship" in the historically white and rural Illinois Conference. Sonido de Alabanza, for example, has grown from 90 members to 900 members in little more than a decade. In addition to the area Hispanic congregations, another six are mostly African-American.

Chicago Tribune

TODAY'S TRIBUNE

SPORTS

Mennonites' rural image undergoing a conversion

Hispanics, blacks fuel new growth for church

Final Four controversy

Africa gets

City gang influences show up in small towns

Assembly focuses on mental health

Psychiatrist, agency recognized for their efforts

ATLANTA—At the same time a former first lady urged the church to remove the stigmas from mental illness, a church organization recognized one of its members and an entire agency for such work.

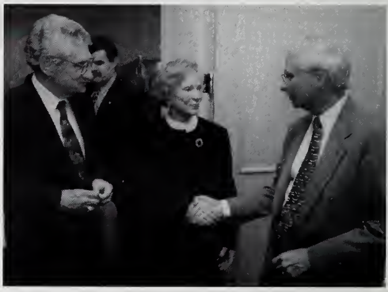
Rosalynn Carter, a mental health advocate and wife of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, was the keynote speaker at the 47th annual Mennonite Health Assembly, which drew more than 400 professional health-care providers March 26-29. The event—the largest in assembly history—was sponsored by Mennonite Health Services (MHS) and Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA).

"I am looking forward to the day when people do not have to feel ashamed to admit they have family members who are mentally ill," Carter told the assembly.

She is the author of an upcoming book for people who want to help others with mental illness. "Caregivers are under enormous stress, and most say they are not receiving practical help from the faith community," she said.

One who has tried to address mental illness and the church is John A. Toews, a psychiatrist and medical professor from Calgary who received the 1998 Anabaptist Health Care Award.

"John speaks with passion and compassion as he discusses the issues of mental health, mental illness and their interrelatedness to spiritual health," said MMA board member Gene Yoder, who presented the MMA-sponsored award.



Mennonite Health Services president Larry Nikkel (right) greets former first lady Rosalynn Carter while Mennonite Mutual Aid president Howard Brenneman looks on during the Mennonite Health Assembly March 22-26 in Atlanta. Carter, a mental health advocate, was the assembly's keynote speaker.

Toews is the author of the book *No Longer Alone: Mental Health and the Church* (Herald Press, 1995) and a member of Dalhousie Community Mennonite Brethren Church.

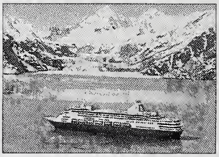
The assembly also celebrated the 50th anniversary of MHS. The organization grew out of the experiences of Mennonite conscientious objectors in mental hospitals during World War II. "The unbelievable neglect we saw in state and veterans' hospitals began to stir our collective consciences," said Art Jost, former chief executive officer at Kings View mental health facility in Reedley, Calif.

The new organization, created in 1947 by Mennonite Central Committee, was known as Mennonite Mental Health Services until 1989 when it changed its name to MHS and expanded to include hospitals, retirement communities and developmental disabilities programs.

"If Mennonite health institutions continue to build on the three pillars of service, accountability to the church and the spiritual dimensions of healing, they will continue to flourish," said MHS president Larry Nikkel.

In other assembly activity, speaker David Hilton, director of Ecumenical Health Ministries in Atlanta, said the church must not leave health care entirely to health-care professionals. After all, he said, the church's fundamental purpose is well-being: spiritual, social and physical. "We've got to take this responsibility God has given us," Hilton said.—*MMA and MHS news services*

> **I am looking forward to the day when people do not have to feel ashamed to admit they have family members who are mentally ill.**
>
> *—Rosalynn Carter*



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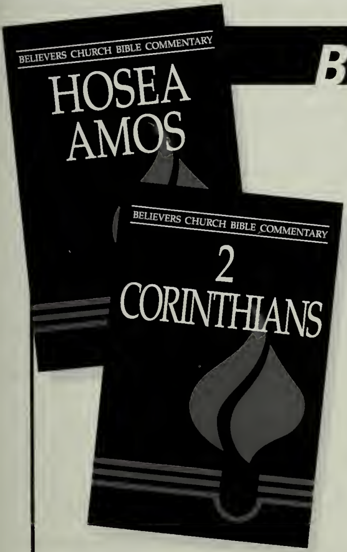
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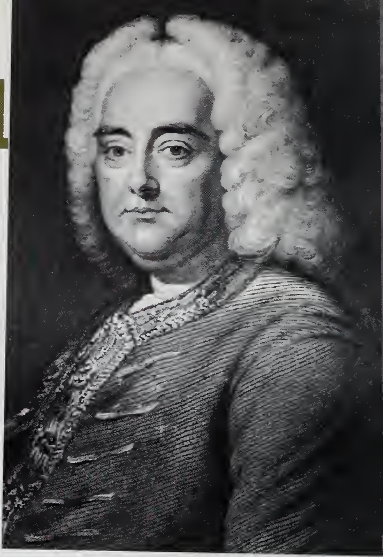
It's only rock 'n' roll ...but can I like it?



by Bob Hostetler

"His music's indecent!"

"It's shocking!"

"Offensive."

"I'll never go to one of his concerts again."

When London was exposed to his latest music, many fans came away with feelings like these. The performer was no heavy-metal guitarist, however, but George Frideric Handel, whose oratorio, *Messiah*, opened to a cool reception. Handel's text, composed entirely of Scripture, was considered inappropriate for the theater houses where it played.

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, likewise had some explaining to do when his fledgling movement reversed Handel's tactic. Cyril Barnes writes in *God's Army* (Lion, 1978):

"The theatre in Worcester was crowded for the visit of William Booth on Jan. 22, 1882. ... George 'Sailor' Fielder, the Commanding Officer, had been put up to sing. He had been a sea captain with a voice that had often been heard above the roar of the waves. ... He sang his testimony with the words, 'Bless His name, He sets me free.'

" 'That was a fine song. What tune was that?' [Booth inquired] later.

" 'Oh,' came the reply in a rather disapproving tone. 'General, that's a dreadful tune. ... That's "Champagne Charlie is my name." '

" 'That settles it,' Booth decided as he turned to [his son] Bramwell. 'Why should the devil have all the best tunes?' "

Thoughtful Christians should not necessarily reject music that does not overtly preach the gospel, but they should not tolerate music that contradicts the gospel or compromises their convictions.

Handel wrote and Booth spoke long before the advent of jazz, swing, rock, death metal and rap music. What guidelines can a Christian use today in the choice of music?

The music: Questions about what styles of music are proper for a Christian have existed for centuries. Martin Luther ignited criticism by adopting the tunes of work songs and drinking songs as settings for congregational hymns (such as his "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"). Some Christians once considered the syncopated style of jazz music "low" and profane. And many Christians have serious doubts today about the various forms of rock music.

Can the style of music influence its suitability? Can a particular form of music be "Christian" or "non-Christian"? Is classical music inherently "good" and rock music "bad"? Or is the musical style neutral?

Booth believed the style was incidental. "Secular music, do you say, belongs to the devil? Does it?" he said. "Well, if it did I would plunder him for it, for he has no right to a single note of the whole seven. ... Every note and every strain and every harmony is divine, and belongs to us." He maintained that music, whatever the style, is a gift of God.

But music not only "hath charms to soothe the savage beast," it also possesses the power to inflame it. Therefore, whether it's Maurice Ravel or Toni Braxton, music must be judged by the moods it creates, the passions it stirs.

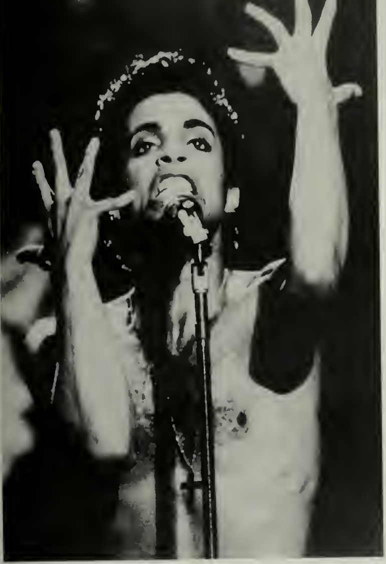
If one really wishes to be sure that music tastes and habits please God, one needs to ask, "Does the music I listen to stir feelings in me that draw me closer to God? Does it fill me with an appreciation for God's gift of music? Does it (at least) not prompt ungodly impulses or images and hinder my walk with God?" If the answers to those questions are positive, fine. If not, one needs to adjust one's listening habits.

The message: The music itself is not the only basis for evaluating one's musical tastes and tendencies. The discerning Christian will also want to consider the message of song lyrics.

Does this mean Christians should only listen to music with "Christian" lyrics? Do Christians have to chuck their Bruce Springsteen albums?

Some songs out there are too raunchy or communicate the wrong things, and if they don't meet the criteria expected of the music itself, then they should be chucked.

But what about songs that are OK but not "Christian"? John W. Styll, publisher and execu-



Music, message, messenger: Composer George Frideric Handel (far left) was criticized in his day, and the rock star known as Prince (near left) has been castigated in his.

tive editor of *CCM* magazine, says, "How many times do you have to say 'Jesus' or 'God' or 'Holy Spirit' for a song to be Christian? What if a song by a non-Christian includes those names? Or what if a song by a Christian does not? Are both Christian songs? Neither?"

Michael W. Smith, the Christian crossover artist who scored a hit with "Place in This World" and "I Will Be Here for You," said in a phone interview, "I honestly don't like the phrase 'contemporary Christian music' or 'gospel.' A lot of times I just wish I could be referred to as an artist. … My relationship with Jesus is the most important thing to me in the whole world. So I feel that everything I sing about, even if I sing about the sun coming up, is going to come from a Christian standpoint."

If Christians are free to enjoy paintings that do not portray biblical scenes, to read "secular" history, humor and fiction, then perhaps Christians can be enriched by a Mariah Carey song or a Mozart symphony.

Some Christians supplement their "Christian music" diet with the best among "secular" artists. Others will listen to nothing but music produced by Christians for Christians. Still other believers wouldn't know Sandy Patti from DC Talk.

Thoughtful Christians should not necessarily reject music that does not overtly preach the gospel, but they should not tolerate music that contradicts the gospel or compromises their convictions.

The messenger: If discerning Christians feel comfortable with some particular music and its message, should they concern themselves with the messenger? Should a Christian avoid a singer's music because she appears onstage in skimpy lingerie? What about "Christian" artists whose personal lives don't conform to biblical standards as one understand them?

A man's lifestyle will dictate whether I'm interested in hearing him preach a sermon. A woman's character will often determine whether I will buy her book. Is the same true of a musician?

On the other hand, the beauty of a painting isn't always affected by the morality of the artists, and a dazzling touchdown pass doesn't have to be caught by an upstanding citizen to prompt me to applaud. Should more be required of a singer?

Some performers' lifestyles are so immoral and their opinions so anti-Christian that this can't help but be communicated in their performances. The immorality of others may not color their music but may still give Christians cause for discomfort. In such cases, a good rule of thumb is, "If in doubt, throw it out." Paul the Apostle suggests that if your conscience is bothered by something, it is best to leave it alone (1 Corinthians 8:7).

How can Christians decide what music they should (or shouldn't) listen to? Here are some guidelines:

1. Music, whether classical, country, rap or rock, must be judged according to the moods it creates and the emotions it stirs. Christians should ask, "Does it stir feelings that draw me closer to God or fill me with an appreciation for God's gift of music?"

2. The message of the lyrics must be evaluated carefully, according to the same criteria as the musical style. Christians should not tolerate music that contradicts the gospel or compromises their convictions.

3. The messenger should likewise be taken into account. Performers often (rightly or wrongly) become role models, and role models must be chosen carefully. In short, if one is uncomfortable about an entertainer's conduct or opinions, why give him or her repeated opportunities to influence?

Few people know that, following the initial performance of Handel's *Messiah*, the composer was attacked from the pulpit for 52 straight Sundays by none other than John Newton, the writer of "Amazing Grace." Yet today both Newton's hymn and Handel's oratorio have been a means of blessing to many, Christians and non-Christians alike. Both compositions are considered sacred today because they have been used with holy purpose.

That presents a challenge: to sanctify the music we make or listen to by using it all with holy purpose.

Bob Hostetler, a writer, editor and speaker, lives near Oxford, Ohio.

My children are now at an age when I find it difficult to stay current with the music they listen to. However, we have managed to agree on a tactic that allows me to help them choose their music (whether Christian or secular) wisely.

Some time ago, I told my children (ages 12 and 13) that they can buy any music tape or CD they wished, provided (1) it does not bear a "parental advisory" sticker; (2) it remains in the cellophane wrapper until I open it and listen to the entire recording (or read the enclosed lyric sheet); (3) it be returned to the store for a refund or exchange if I do not approve.

Such an arrangement requires a sacrifice on my part and theirs: I must listen to some music I don't understand or enjoy, and they must sometimes wait for days until listening to their latest music purchases (on some occasions, we have returned to the same store three times before finding a wise choice). The arrangement isn't perfect, but the discussions it has prompted are helping my children evaluate the music they buy—as well as the music they listen to on the radio.

—Bob Hostetler

Jazz in church?
One Mennonite's experience

by Larry Penner

The debate over appropriate church music is as old as the hills, and I don't presume to have the solution. But music has been central to my spiritual life; at times it was the only thing keeping me connected to faith. I wonder if others out there share my experience.

I grew up in the church singing four-part chorales, picking out the bass part from the voices around me. I had a knack for music that was nurtured through countless childhood performances in front of the church. Once in grade school I accompanied my sister's singing with my violin. We stood too close, and in the middle of a verse I poked her head with my up-bow. When we finished, the congregation smiled.

I majored in music at Goshen (Ind.) College and learned to sing art songs and arias. I also learned about the rich tradition of African-American music and spent hours listening to the saxophone of John Coltrane and trying to emulate the piano of Thelonius Monk. All through college I wondered how the music I studied related to my faith—so much so that for my senior music project I wrote a short book about my experience with music in the church.

Since college I've been in churches that carried on the tradition of a cappella singing and in churches that sang praise songs from an overhead projector, and I experienced God in both places. I also experienced spiritually empty singing. Most often the difference was the spirit I brought to the sanctuary, not the type of music that was sung.

Not long ago I served as music minister at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church and more recently have had the opportunity to revive my jazz piano interest with the resident jazz ensemble at Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa. This congregation has had a special relationship with jazz, which it celebrates every year with a Jazz Sunday service. The service weaves together the spiritual expressions of African-American and other American jazz musicians with worship. I believe CMCL's commitment to justice and racial reconciliation is intimately tied to its love of music that grew out of black gospel and blues roots—music of an oppressed people.

I don't have the answer to what music is appropriate in worship. But I do know that God has come to me in many ways, through many types of music. Learning about the jazz that was foreign to my upbringing opened my eyes to another people's experience of God, so I can't support suppressing diverse musical expressions. A musical spirit is an open spirit, and God calls us to stretch ourselves into unfamiliar territory.

Larry Penner lives in Lancaster, Pa.

Christ:
human and divine

by Mathew Swora

"What if God was one of us?" sings Joan Osborne in a hit song from 1996. That question touches the heart of a uniquely Christian and, for many people, a supremely scandalous assertion. The Apostle Paul told the Colossian Christians that in Christ "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Colossians 1:19). God indeed was one of us, a Palestinian Jewish rabbi and carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth.

The incarnation, as this mystery is called, was boldly asserted by Jews like Paul who normally would have been scandalized by any physical representation of God. Yet Paul writes, "He is the image of the invisible God" (1:15).

Paul presents a "both-and" mystery, someone who was the image of God, yet a flesh-and-blood human in a specific time and place. Paul wanted to draw the faith of his audience away from the rules and the spiritual beings in whom they trusted and direct it to Christ, God's all-sufficient answer to their needs. Paul employs the language of worship rather than scholarship. To have both discipleship and security, a Christ we trust and follow, the Savior must be divine and human. He must be fully divine to be our Savior. He must also be fully human to be our Savior.

How do we become more Christlike? The Eastern Orthodox churches call this process "deification." God through Christ took on human nature so that humans through Christ may progressively partake of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

Though I don't know exactly how the fullness of God dwelt in Jesus the first-century Jew or how the Word progressively becomes flesh in our lives (the Spirit and the spiritual disciplines are vital), I believe the incarnation of God in Christ has everything to say about Christian life and mission.

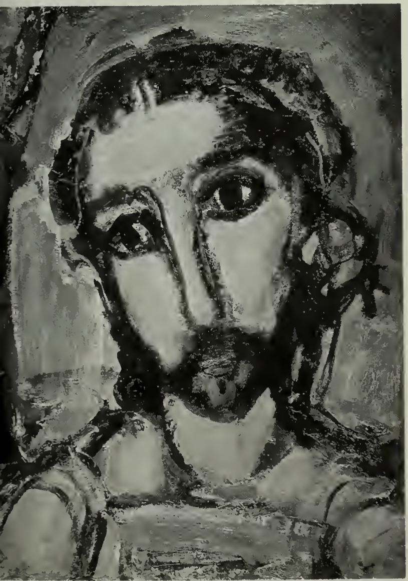
Paul asserts that Christ will have "first place in everything" (1:18). There is nothing left out of the scope of Christ's claim to supreme lordship, not even the mighty powers that crucified him. The Colossian Christians, who were being recaptured by the worship of heavenly beings and powers and by a pagan-Jewish mix of legalism (2:8, 16-23), needed to be reminded of Christ's glory and all-sufficiency.

Political agenda: So do we. No Christian is immune from what C.S. Lewis called the "Christ-and" temptation. We so often desire to add something to Christ to make him more appealing and palatable to our age or to fulfill personal desires. We are tempted to add our political agenda (conservative or liberal) or the latest spiritual trend (New Age or materialistic). But Paul's Christ reigns over these partial, passing powers. Through Christ, God is reconciling all things and people through the peace bought by the blood shed on the cross (1:20).

One thing the incarnation tells us about our Christian lives is to cooperate with God's work of reconciliation and peace, not live in the fear that attacks scapegoats and enemies. For the human flesh we crucify was also God's flesh in Christ.

The divine Christ deserves supreme lordship over every aspect of our lives. But the human Christ shows us we need not fear or deny the existence of our sins and temptations; they won't dethrone him. God through Christ knows the pain and confusion of temptation and suffering. We can be assured of a compassionate welcome to our prayers and confessions (Hebrews 4:15-16). God through Christ has experienced the ugliness of temptation and suffering with us.

This exalted image of Christ has inspired generations of Christian missionaries. So convinced were they of his lordship over people and places where his name was unknown that they were willing to risk death to make him known. Some 19th-century missionaries brought their possessions overseas in coffins, prepared to die in Christ's service.



"Head of Christ" by Georges Rouault, from The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Hann Fund

Beginnings, which began in our first issue (Feb. 17) and has run in every other issue since, is a series of articles that reflect on selected biblical passages where the word "beginning" appears.

No Christian is immune from what C.S. Lewis called the "Christ-and" temptation. We so often desire to add something to Christ to make him more appealing and palatable to our age or to fulfill personal desires.

For the church in mission, the 21st century will be more like the first than the 20th. Like Paul the Apostle, contemporary Christian missionaries are addressing a religiously and culturally diverse world that is often as technologically advanced as their own. New missionary teams are being composed of Christians from churches around the globe. The humility and vulnerability of the human Christ will be needed to open doors slammed tight to colonialism and domination. It has been said that this new/old world will require missionaries with 19th-century commitment—inspired by the divine Christ—and with 21st-century sensitivity and humility—inspired by the human Christ.

Paul's prescription for the Colossian Christians applies to Christians on the verge of each new era or endeavor. The coming merger of two Mennonite denominations is such a time. The lordship and the supremacy of the divine Christ are why we should move in this direction. The things that once divided us must be laid at Christ's feet.

But the humanity, vulnerability and humility of the human Christ shows us how we must proceed with integration. I think of this every time I hear someone from either denomination ask, "Will they outnumber us?" or "Will we be dominated?" Just as God through Christ was one of us, so in the new denomination there should be only "us," no more "they." Unlike the Colossian Christians, let's not go back to the slavery of old legalisms and lose sight of the all-sufficient, all-supreme Christ.

Mathew Swora is pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, St. Paul, Minn.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

—Colossions 1:15-20

MVS centralizes offices as part of merger

NEWTON, Kan.—As part of the ongoing integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, administration of Mennonite Voluntary Service has been centralized into one office in Newton. MVS, a joint program of the Commission on Home Ministries and Mennonite Board of Missions, formerly also had offices at MBM headquarters in Elkhart, Ind.

Newton now houses MVS finance and personnel supervision. The Newton office will also add a half-time staff member. Meanwhile, Youth Venture, a GC-MC short-term summer work camp program, has been shifted to Elkhart.

CHM and MBM continue to split the MVS budget.—*GCMC and MBM news services*

Seminary adds mission, evangelism programs

ELKHART, Ind.—The board of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary has approved two new programs in mission and evangelism.

The master of arts program in mission and evangelism will be designed to prepare students for leadership in Christian witness in North America or overseas. The master of divinity program has also added an emphasis in mission and evangelism for students preparing for pastoral ministry. Both programs need to be approved by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

First 'Aussiedler' arrive in southern Manitoba

WINKLER, Man.—The first "Aussiedler" family has arrived in southern Manitoba, and another 30 have applied to immigrate. But there is room for more, says Adele Dyck, who spearheads local assistance efforts.

"Aussiedler" are ethnic Germans who lived in the former Soviet Union but moved to Germany. Many are Mennonites and prefer to go to Canada from Germany, where unemployment is 15 percent.

Dyck, who moved to Canada from Paraguay, where her parents relocated from Germany, says Manitoba took in only about 4,000 "Aussiedler" in 1996, nearly half of what it could. Furthermore, she says, southern Manitoba has a long-standing need for skilled tradespeople.—*Canadian Mennonite*

Eastern Mennonite University to graduate 284

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite University will confer degrees on 284 students during the school's 80th commencement ceremony April 26. The graduates will include 184 bachelor of science, 79 bachelor of arts and 27 master of arts students. Harold H. Saunders of the Kettering Foundation in Washington will give the commencement address.

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Young adult retreat, May 7-10, Lakewood, Colo. Sponsored by Young Adult Reference Council (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Young Adult Network (Mennonite Church). Contact: Jan Wedel, Commission on Education, 722 Main St., Newton, KS 67114.

Friendship Mennonite Church, Bedford Heights, Ohio, 50th anniversary, June 12-14. Contact: 216-662-6788.

Births

Baer, M. Brianna, Jan. 8, to Dalena (Hurst) and Rodrick Baer, Ephrata, Pa.

Brooks, Colin Tomas, Jan. 29, to Dennis and Sheri Brooks, Siauliai, Lithuania.

Derstine, Luke, Jan. 11, to Rosita (Benner) and Tim Derstine, Danville, Pa.

Kauffman, Courtney Erin, March 24, to Kim (Stjernholm) and Tim Kauffman, Denver.

Miller, Alex Ryan, Feb. 24, to Cheryl (Waldeman) and Scott Miller, Peru, Ind.

Moyer, Kelsey Michaela, March 30, to Lori (Moyer) and Mike Moyer, Souderton, Pa.

Negron, Allyssa Evanna, Feb. 14, to Jacqueline and Roy Negron, Chalfont, Pa.

Nelke, Alyssa Ann, Feb. 24, to Chris and Cindy Nelke, Arizona.

Peltier, Steven Andrew, Jan. 20, to Steven and Susan (Schaefer) Peltier, Phoenix.

Sauder, Alison Paige, March 25, to John and Rose (Kraybill) Sauder, Lancaster, Pa.

Saylor, Kolby Eugene, March 6, to Jerry and Kristi (Spayde) Saylor, Salunga, Pa.

Springer, Lydia Ann, March 20, to Scott and Tricia (Vick) Springer, Delavan, Ill.

Wood, Emma Lynn, March 11, to Kelly (Slagel) and Matt Wood, Washington, Iowa.

Zeiset, Hannah Joy, Feb. 25, to Fred and Jolyn Zeiset, Manheim, Pa.

Zimmerman, Julianne Louise, Feb. 27, to Rodney and Sharon (Hostetter) Zimmerman, Lititz, Pa.

Marriages

Long/Zimmerman: Christopher Long, Northumberland, Pa., and Diane Zimmerman, Turbotville, Pa., March 7, by David Martins.

Lopez/Solano: Freddy Lopez, Portland, Ore., and Maya Solano, Portland, Feb. 28, by Ralph Lind.

Mast/Reed: Mark Mast, Nappanee, Ind., and Colleen Reed, South Bend, Ind., March 14, by Wesley Bontreger.

Maust/Treloar: J. Scott Maust, Pigeon, Mich., and Bridget Treloar, Pigeon, Feb. 14, by Charles Smith.

Deaths

Burkholder, Charles H., 85, Harper, Kan., died March 17. Survivors: children Howard, Gilbert, Sidney, Joan Myers, Margaret Johnson;16 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 20 at Harper by Vernon Whitmore and Royce Vogt.

Detweiler, Mahlon H., 83, Souderton, Pa., died March 7. Survivors: wife, Edna; children Eleanor Hawks, Lorraine Mast, Bernice Whirledge, Gloria Walejewski, Walter, Darwin; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: March 12 at Line Lexington, Pa., by Lowell Delp and John King.

Gerber, Loyal D., 64, Archbold, Ohio, died March 23 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Shirley; children Linda, Sharon, Judy Snyder, Gary Tubby (adopted); three grandchildren; parents, Clyde and Fannie Gerber. Burial: March 26 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Ron Guengerich and Dee Swartz.

Guengerich, Clarence, 81, Glendale, Ariz., died March 9. Survivors: wife, Mary; son, Robert; three grandchildren. Burial: March 12 at Glendale by Dennis Stauffer.

Heishman, Theda Shetter, 79, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 23 of cancer. Survivors: children Barbara Headings, Bonita Sauder, James; seven grandchildren. Burial: March 26 at Harrisonburg by Phil Kniss, Shirley Yoder Brubaker and Owen Burkholder.

Hostetter, Nora Isabella, 93, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 24. Burial: March 27 at Harrisonburg by David Yoder, Owen Burkholder and Loren Horst.

Kinsinger, Dorothy, 79, Parnell, Iowa, died March 10. Burial: March 13 at Parnell by David Boshart.

Regier, Walter Henry, 82, Enid, Okla., died March 19. Survivors: wife, Ruby; children Charles, Jerry, James; eight grandchildren; one great-grand child. Burial: March 23 at Enid.

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Classifieds

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church seeks applicants for the position of half-time ***church administrator***. Responsibilities include oversight of finances and nonministerial staff, stewardship education, facilities maintenance and development.

Send letter of application, resume, transcript and three references to Marsha Yoder, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista Street, Sarasota, FL 34232.

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church: The search committee of Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., is seeking resumes of people interested in serving as ***minister of youth and young adults.***

Candidates should submit their resume or letter of interest by May 22 to A. Jerome Yoder, chair, Search Committee, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following positions for the 1998-99 school year: ***social studies / personal finance instructor*** (85 percent time with benefits), one-year position; ***guidance counselor*** (50 percent time).

Send resume to Ronald L. Hertzler, acting principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446.

Penn Foundation, a private behavioral health-care facility affiliated with Mennonite Health Services, seeks fee-for-service ***psychiatrist*** to perform initial evaluations and medication reviews. Located in scenic Upper Bucks County, 40 miles north of Philadelphia, our diversified community-oriented practice serves suburban-rural areas of Sellersville, Newtown and Langhorne. Our multidisciplinary staff includes eight staff psychiatrists. Services include a comprehensive outpatient and partial hospital, 26-bed inpatient unit with active consultation service and 27-bed inpatient substance abuse treatment center. Board certification and experience with adults and children preferred.

Please send CV to Vernon H. Kratz, M.D., Penn Foundation, P.O. Box 32, Sellersville, PA 18960; 215-257-6551. EOE

Eastern Mennonite University needs a ***graphic designer***, 12-month, full-time position. Bachelor's degree in art, communication, graphic arts or related field. Graphic design experience. Application deadline: May 1. Multiethnic people are encouraged to apply.

Contact EMU human resources office, 540-432-4108; email: ebybj@emu.edu.

Mennonite Health Services seeks an individual for ***executive leadership*** of health-care services in a rural community. Services include acute care, outpatient services, long-term care. Expansion with assisted living is planned. The position requires expertise with health-care operations, assessment and planning, and communication with internal and community constituents. The not-for-profit system is in a community with strong church presence.

Send confidential inquires and/or resume to MHS, 234 S. Main St., Suite A, Goshen, IN 46526; fax 219-534-3254.

Goshen College: Goshen College has an immediate opening for the administrative position of ***theater technical director and house manager*** for the campus theater, Umble Center. Responsibilities include management of state of the art facility, supervision of lighting, audio, set, make-up and costumes for events in the Umble Center and lighting for two other facilities, hiring and supervising student crews.

Requirements: B.A. required with M.A. or M.F.A. preferred, strong background in theater with two to three years experience, supervisory experience and interest in working in academic setting (including assisting with courses). Screening of applicants begins after April 20, 1998. The position will remain open until filled. Responsibilities begin as soon as applicant is available, no later than Aug. 1, 1998.

Please send curriculum vitae and three letters of reference to Marty Kelley, director of human resources, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7507; fax 219-535-7060; email: martyeo@goshen.edu. Goshen College, an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Fresno Pacific University's Graduate School seeks a ***science educator*** to teach, advise and give leadership to its Master of Arts program in science education. The science education program is housed in the graduate school's division of math, science and technology education. Faculty in the division share time with the AIMS Educational Foundation and have developed a national reputation for innovative and personalized programs in education. Doctorate (or nearly completed degree) in the field desired. Fresno Pacific University is a dynamic Christian liberal arts college of the Mennonite Brethren Church. All candidates for faculty positions must share the university's Christian commitment.

For full description and application form, write or phone one of the numbers below: Dr. Howard J. Loewen, provost, Fresno Pacific University, 1717 S. Chestnut, Fresno, CA 93702; 209-453-2023; fax 209-453-5502; hloewen@fresno.edu. Women and members of minority groups are especially encouraged to apply. Applications will be evaluated beginning May 15, 1998, and the appointment will be made as soon thereafter as a suitable candidate is secured.

Lancaster Mennonite High School has teaching positions in ***English, Bible/social studies*** and part-time ***art*** beginning August 1998.

Contact David A. King, Lancaster Mennonite High School, 2176 Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, PA 17602; 717-299-0436; fax 717-299-0823; email lmh@redrose.net.

Landis Homes has a full-time opening for a ***director of marketing and admissions.*** Qualifications include training in social work, marketing or a related field. Experience working in a retirement community or long-term care operation preferred. Position begins around June 1.

Contact Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543 or call 717-581-3936.

Little Eden Camp, Onekama, Mich., member of Mennonite Camping Association, seeks full-time positions in ***food service*** and ***voluntary service as generalists.*** Positions available August.

For more information, call 616-889-4294 or email LittleEden@juno.com.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the position of ***director of East Asia programs***. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position based in Akron, Pa., starting Sept. 1, 1998. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree, experience in East Asia, administrative and communications skills and an understanding of the global Mennonite church. Travel required.

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact Dwight McFadden, 21 S. 12th St., P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; 717-859-1151; email djm@mcc.org. Applications due June 1.

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by Gordon Houser

Perhaps nothing touches Mennonites as deeply as music. Marlene Kropf has written, "What we cannot find words to express, we speak with conviction when we sing." And while many of us sing from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, many also sing from a growing collection of music beyond our hymnal.

As one who came to the Mennonite church as an adult, I soon noticed the pride Mennonites take in their singing. Good singing is obviously part of many Mennonite churches.

Mennonites are also involved in instrumental forms of music, whether in high school bands or orchestras, symphonies, jazz combos or rock groups.

One of the ways we interact with the broader culture is through the music we listen to, which may also affect the music we participate in or perform. I venture to guess that Mennonites listen to just about every kind of music there is and that we would never agree as a whole about which music is OK and which is not. Our tastes in music differ, of course, but I'm discussing what parameters we place on those tastes.

Bob Hostetler (page 8) offers his approach to evaluating whether or not we should listen to certain music. While I don't agree with everything he says, he at least raises questions we need to think about, for our own participation in music as well as for how we handle our children's use of music.

Rock music: When I was in college, my Christian friends and I had debates about which music was appropriate for Christians to listen to. I remember once lecturing a guy about the rock music he listened to. He said, "You realize you're the weaker brother."

I understood later that he was right. He felt free to listen to that music, and it did not seem to harm his Christian walk. The fact that I had trouble with it meant that I was the "weaker member" Paul refers to in Romans 15 and 1 Corinthians 10.

Is music a gift, a part of God's good creation? Can it be misused or corrupted? If so, how? And how does it affect us?

This last question is perhaps what concerns people most. We tend to focus on the music our children listen to, but it applies as well to the hymns we sing that communicate bad theology or are simply facile.

As I've grown in my Christian walk, I tend to see music more as a part of God's wonderful creation that we are to enjoy with thanksgiving. I worry less about every word or note fitting perfectly with how I think.

As I write I am listening to Mozart's "Symphony No. 41 in C." Do I think about the composer's immoral behavior or enjoy the beautiful complexity of instrumental harmony? The latter.

My own tastes are eclectic. At work I often listen to classical (Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Schubert) or to jazz (Joe Henderson, Stanley Turentine, Roy Hargrove, John Coltrane). At home I listen to a wide array of music (from the Gin Blossoms to Sam Phillips to Collective Soul to Sting).

While I feel free to listen to various kinds of music, I realize others don't share my tastes or my freedom, and I do not want to impose my freedom on others. Also I'm careful with my children's listening habits. I agree with Bob Hostetler's practice of listening to the music his children want to buy, then talking with them about which CDs they may buy. I believe it's only fair to listen to the music first rather than condemning it out of hand. And I've enjoyed talking with my 15-year-old son about the music he likes.

We need to think about our listening practices and exercise caution about what we buy. At the same time we should enjoy music as a wonderful gift from God.

Is music a gift, a part of God's good creation? Can it be misused or corrupted? If so, how? And how does it affect us?

From our readers: Betsy Eggerling of Mertztown, Pa., shares two of her favorite films. *Romero*, starring Raul Julia in the title role as the Salvadoran archbishop who is assassinated while serving Communion, Betsy writes, portrays well this hero's transformation of concern for the poor. *Dersu Uzala*, directed by Akira Kurosawa, "is a beautiful people study, lovely and touching."

music

Three CDs passed on to me recently reflect different approaches to sacred songs.

Hymns from the Ryman, produced by Gary Chapman and featuring Chapman with special guests Chet Atkins, Michael W. Smith, Ruth McGinnis and Buddy Greene, gives a country feel to traditional hymns such as "Amazing Grace," "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and "Fairest Lord Jesus." (The Ryman is a building in Nashville, Tenn., where many country artists have performed.) Chapman's arrangements and lilting voice are both interesting and soothing to hear.

Endless Song by Louella Klassen Friesen (soprano) and Audrey Falk Janzen (piano) includes 19 pieces. A few are new arrangements of older songs, including pieces by Bach, Handel and Gershwin, but most are newer hymns such as "Shepherd Me, O God" and "Lord, Listen to Your Children," both of which are in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

Altogether unique is *Leaving Everything Behind: the Songs and Memories of a Cheyenne Woman* by Bertha Little Coyote and Virginia Giglio. Bertha is a member of Mennonite Indian Church, Seiling, Okla. Virginia, author of *Southern Cheyenne Women's Songs*, recorded the songs and memories of this "outspoken, unquestionably courageous and energetically expressive of opinions" woman. She has captured not only a valuable record of Cheyenne life but the lively, charismatic personality of Bertha Little Coyote, who has been an important influence in the Mennonite church.

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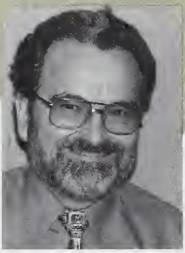

J. Lorne Peachey

'When they had sung the hymn'

As much as we Mennonites like music, we may have to sing more. The times we live in demand it.

As Gordon Houser notes in Mediaculture (page 15), music is important to Mennonites. Because of that, we use it for many purposes. For example, as a teenager I used music as one way to rebel. I'll never forget the puzzled looks on the faces of my parents, whose music was mostly country, when I brought home my first album—Beethoven's "Seventh Symphony."

Fortunately, they didn't make a big issue of our differences. I had to remember that when one of my children brought home a Bon Jovi rock album. Likely they'll have their own struggles when they have children. Disagreements about music, especially between the generations, continues—one reason we print articles like Bob Hostetler's "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll ... But Can I Like It?" (page 8).

Our homes aren't the only places where we have music battles. Is there a congregation that hasn't experienced "worship wars"? One side, wanting stability and rootedness, argues for familiar hymns. The other, wanting newness and freshness, finds more meaning in contemporary music sung "off the wall."

Disagreements like this tend to make us forget the ultimate purpose of our singing: to praise and worship God. By far the majority of times the Bible refers to songs, the reference has to do with worship and praise. Just one reading of the Psalms confirms this.

Singing allows us to align our aspirations and ambitions with our emotions and feelings, both as individuals and as groups.

Singing is also important in the Scriptures when one wants to celebrate. Check out Miriam's song—likely one of the earliest recorded—in Exodus 15, commemorating victory over the Egyptians. David used song and dance for the same purpose when he outwitted the Philistines (1 Chronicles 13).

Songs can also be used to teach. The end of the book of Deuteronomy has Moses composing a song for Israel to help them remember their history—and to teach it to their children.

One of the few instances of music in the New Testament came during the final week of Jesus' life. At the Last Supper, the disciples had just learned that one of them would betray Jesus (Mark 14), even who it would be (John 13). In the midst of conflicting emotions, before they went out into an uncertain and fearful future, Jesus apparently led the group in a hymn (Matthew 26:30).

How beautiful the sounds those 12 disciples made that night is difficult to imagine. Singing doesn't go well when you are frightened and confused. But it must have been an important thing to do. Matthew and Mark record the incident in their gospels with identical words: "When they had sung the hymn ... " (Mark 14:26, NRSV).

Like the disciples, today we too face internal strife and contention. We have disagreements about who should or should not belong to our group—and how to handle those who come to a different conclusion than we do. By far the most emotional discussion at the recent joint meeting of the general boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church had to do with who will be members of the new, integrated Mennonite Church.

Today in many situations, we find ourselves more inclined to argue than to sing. Or we are impatient to realize the newness that we believe an integrated church will bring, and we concentrate our energies on getting the job done, with little energy left for song.

But singing may be exactly what we need to do. Is there anything that can do more to unite those of us who are fearful with those of us pushing ahead? Singing is a time when we are reminded that what is most beautiful comes, not only from individual achievement or desire, but also from blending our time and energy and talent with those of our neighbors. Singing allows us to align our aspirations and ambitions with our emotions and feelings, both as individuals and as groups. Somehow, almost mysteriously, making music together brings disparate parts into a more unified whole.

May singing continue to be an important, even prideful part of who we are as Mennonites. Like with Jesus' disciples, the singing of hymns will get us through whatever difficult days there are ahead—and become the basis for whatever celebrating we may eventually want to do. May history also one day record of us: "When they had sung the hymn ... "*—jlp*

the Mennonite

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search for faithfulness

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T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Merger's momentum

I appreciate that it is important to address issues of polity and membership relative to the proposed General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church merger (*The Mennonite*, April 7). But I would remind the general boards that the initiative for merger originated at the congregational and area conference levels. This has taken the form of dual-affiliated congregations and cooperation among congregations of the two denominations at the local level, resulting in the merged area conferences of Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, Pacific Southwest and Pacific Northwest.

I agree with the assumption of Darrell Fast and the thinking of Jeff Wright. I also believe all congregations that are currently members in one or both of the existing denominations should automatically be considered members of the merged denomination.

The momentum for membership in the new Mennonite Church must run, as it always has, from the congregation toward the denomination. With all due respect to H. James Smith, his proposals appear to assume that the denomination exists as an entity independent of the congregations that would be inclined to join and support it. By extension of logic, it would be possible to have a denomination with no one choosing to join it. That, of course, would be no denomination at all.

Membership within the denomination cannot be coerced. It is currently possible for a congregation to opt out of membership in a denomination, and I suppose that freedom would continue in the future. Of course, opting out is not the spirit we would hope for. I would caution any group assigned with the task of proposing membership criteria to not lose sight of the vision of congregational cooperation that gave rise to the denomination in the first place.—*Gary F. Daught, Tucson, Ariz.*

Litigation and power

We appreciated the editorial reminding us of Jesus' teachings against litigation and of our traditional Mennonite understanding that lawsuits have no place within the Christian community (*The Mennonite*, March 24). It is misguided, however, to suggest that only those who threaten litigation are wrongly using power. Our church leaders and institutions also wield considerable power within our community, and this power has not always been used in the spirit of servanthood that Jesus demands of leaders. Sometimes those who threaten litigation do so because they feel the church has abused its power in relation to them.

Three years ago, a committee of the Mennonite Lawyers Association wrote to leaders of the Mennonite conferences expressing concerns about the "Guidelines Regarding Ministerial Misconduct." We felt that, in several respects, the guidelines were seriously flawed and denied basic procedural fairness to people accused of sexual misconduct. We proposed specific changes in the document and offered our services gratis to review and comment on any revisions. While our comments were acknowledged with thanks, we were never contacted about revisions, and three years later, the guidelines remain unchanged. If people accused within the church of serious misconduct cannot find justice within the church, should we be surprised if they seek it elsewhere?—*Ruth and Timothy Stoltzfus Jost, Columbus, Ohio*

Good things

There were too many good things in the April 7 issue of *The Mennonite* to not say so. A deep thank you to the person who wrote with her name withheld regarding John Howard Yoder and forgiveness. Thanks for being vulnerable and for truth telling. Your voice—and other survivors' voices—must be heard. Blessings to you as you continue to heal and grow.

I also say a hearty amen to Lee Gouwey's letter. The "militant" Mennonites among us don't do much for winning over "the other side." In most good, cross-cultural training, we are encouraged to listen and to observe, to ask questions and try to understand the other person's way of life before we do anything. As we adapt this to the church, we have to rethink and reweave central portions of our faith, knowing that if God is God of all of us, then some of our assumptions really aren't useful anymore. The story of SuAnne Big Crow fancy-dancing across the gymnasium floor in the face of the taunting and mocking crowd made that crowd do some rethinking about their assumptions.

Thanks for the editorial on chaos as the start of something new. Just as it is in cross-cultural work, when we are listening and trying to understand this new cultural view, it seems to throw what we've known into chaos. Our comfort zones are challenged, and yet it's in those times that new life emerges and we are blessed beyond our wildest dreams.

The news of Eastern Mennonite Missions asking for forgiveness of the urban leaders was most welcome. Listening to others who come from different places and who have much to offer the rest of us is what kingdom building is all about. We are much more likely to find the answers together as we tear down walls that

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say readers say

separate us and work at understanding each other rather than condemning each other. —*Karen Weldy Kaufman, Elkhart, Ind.*

Drive for celibacy

I believe that sexual urges are God-given for us to enjoy and that within marriage sexual enjoyment is holy. I also believe that sexual drives are stronger in some people than in others.

The church expects her teenagers, her unmarried adults, her widows and widowers and those divorced to remain celibate, no matter how strong or weak their sexual drives are.

I believe that some people are homosexuals. Perhaps they were that way from birth or became that way because of circumstances. How they came to be homosexuals is not my issue here.

Are the sexual drives of homosexuals stronger than those of teenagers, unmarried adults, widows and widowers? If the latter are expected to live celibate lives, why can't homosexuals do likewise? Is there some difference that I am not aware of? Would sublimation damage them in some way? If so, what about sublimation to be practiced by other people who are not married?

I can easily accept nonpracticing homosexuals into the church, just like I can accept other nonmarried people into the church who at least try to sublimate their sexual desires. They try and may occasionally fail, but at that point they can recognize that failure and, with God's help, accept forgiveness and try again.—*Royal H. Bauer, Goshen, Ind.*

No more controversy

All the controversial articles should be eliminated from *The Mennonite*. They have no place in a Christian publication. I wonder how this all pleases God?—*Loretta Mayer, Sarasota, Fla.*

Like storms, MDS sweeps into South

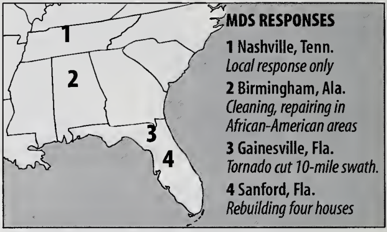
AKRON, Pa.—As storms continue to roll through the Southeast, so do Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers, doing cleaning and construction work in the wake of this spring's rash of tornadoes.

While work continues at two locations in Florida and one in Alabama, local volunteers are responding to the April 16 storms that hit the Nashville, Tenn., region. MDS national coordinator Lowell Detweiler said the response is focusing on rural areas and is not expected to require more than local volunteers.

Meanwhile, MDS is soliciting help for larger, long-term projects. The latest is in Birmingham, Ala., which was hit by an April 8 tornado. Winds at speeds of more than 260 miles per hour stripped bark from trees, tossed cars 100 yards and snapped trees.

Clean-up work is being handled by local people, but reconstruction will take months to complete and will require many volunteers.

Workers are currently removing branches and uprooted trees, helping cover torn roofs and cleaning up in two predominantly African-American communities that initially received little aid. An MDS volunteer has also been doing grief counseling.



MDS RESPONSES

1 Nashville, Tenn.
Local response only
2 Birmingham, Ala.
Cleaning, repairing in African-American areas
3 Gainesville, Fla.
Tornado cut 10-mile swath.
4 Sanford, Fla.
Rebuilding four houses

Jim Butti

In Sanford, Fla., about 25 miles north of Orlando, MDS continues rebuilding at least four homes damaged by Feb. 22 tornadoes.

MDS efforts are also in progress in the Gainesville, Fla., area, where a March 20 tornado touched down at dawn, leaving a 10-mile path of twisted metal, flattened homes and uprooted trees in five counties.

Efforts also continue outside of the storm-beaten Southeast. In Warren, Minn., MDS workers are helping repair and rebuild homes damaged in floods during the springs of 1996 and 1997. That work will continue throughout the summer.—*MCC News Service with Rich Preheim*

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Disaster Service will commemorate its 50th anniversary in 2000 with a book to be written by outgoing MDS coordinator Lowell Detweiler. He is leaving at the end of the month after 12 years in the position.

The book, to be published by Herald Press, is expected to be released at the MDS 50th anniversary celebration June 2-4, 2000, in Hesston, Kan., the birthplace of MDS.
—*MCC News Service*

J. Tyler Klassen

Observing Lent by the book

Diane Zaerr, associate dean at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., reads with a student at Hawthorne Elementary School, located several blocks from the AMBS campus. Every Tuesday during Lent, 12 AMBS students, faculty and staff spent their lunch hour helping Hawthorne students improve their reading skills in one-on-one sessions. The program was an outgrowth of an AMBS mentoring program at Hawthorne.

Taiwanese hospital marks 50 years of healing

HUALIEN, Taiwan—Mennonite Christian Hospital today draws crowds searching for healing, just like they searched out Jesus, says Chris Leuz.

Leuz, a Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) worker in Taiwan, attended the hospital's 50th anniversary celebration on March 26. Among the day's activities was a worship service held in the Gladys Siebert Memorial Chapel, named after the Henderson, Neb., native who served as a nurse and chaplain at the hospital from 1964 until her death in 1989.

The hospital was started by Mennonite Central Committee in 1948, then turned over to COM in 1956.

More anniversary events are set, including one to be held June 19-21 in North Newton, Kan., when 30 hospital staff members will help Roland and Sophie Brown celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. The Browns served with COM at the hospital from 1960 to 1991.
—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

U.N. sanctions leave Iraqi children with little hope, prompt MCC response for leukemia victims

WINNIPEG—Ken From recently returned to Didsbury, Alta., from Iraq with haunting memories and photos he took of children in a Baghdad hospital who will probably die soon.

From was a member of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) delegation that went to Iraq in late March to see what United Nations sanctions have done to the Iraqi people and to deliver some medicines. Some hospitals lack even the most basic medicines and painkillers, such as aspirin.

"There isn't a parent in the world who could come away and not be moved to tears by what's happening there," From says.

At one point during a visit to a Baghdad hospital, From asked if it would be all right to take some photos of the children in the cancer ward. He offered to send back a print of each child. "That will be nice," said the head of the ward. "Then the families will have something when the children die."

In a $100,000 project, MCC is providing medicines for 50 children who have childhood leukemia. With the drugs—which must be administered for two years—more than 80 percent of the children will live. Without the drugs, they will die.

U.N. sanctions permit the sale of a limited amount of Iraqi oil, the proceeds from which can be used for humanitarian goods—including medicines—imported under U.N. monitoring. But the process isn't efficient, and shipments can be delayed and irregular. Furthermore, Iraq's economic woes often mean high prices.

Salma Haddad is head of the leukemia ward at Mansour Hospital, once a respected medical teaching center in Baghdad. When life-saving drugs do trickle in, she is put in the unimaginable position of deciding which of her patients will get the drugs and which will not. To avoid this dilemma, Haddad has often simply distributed the drugs evenly among patients. She knows it isn't scientific and won't save lives, but it's what she feels she has to do.

MCC has asked that the 50 children receiving drugs from MCC be given the full course of 100-week treatments. That way at least some children with leukemia will live.

In southern Iraq—where most of the fighting during the Persian Gulf War occurred—the rate of leukemia has more than quadrupled since 1990. Although comprehensive studies have not been done, the United Nations has recently ordered a major study to help determine the extent of the crisis and its cause.

Some experts say the increase in leukemia rates is caused by armor-piercing shells hardened with radioactive material and used by U.S. troops. Others blame the increase on the chemical-laden haze from refinery fires set ablaze by Saddam Hussein's troops as they retreated or on pollutants resulting from the production of chemical weapons.

MCC's partners in the area—Middle East Council of Churches and the Islamic Relief Agency—will deliver two months worth of the drugs at a time to the families. Two local doctors will ensure the children are receiving the drugs. An MCC worker in Egypt is scheduled to move to Baghdad for nine months to monitor the distribution and provide follow-up reports.
—Rick Fast of MCC News Service

MCC photo by Ken Sensenig

Nine-year-old Ali is being treated for leukemia in a Baghdad hospital, which is short of medicine as a result of United Nations sanctions. Ali's father went to pharmacies throughout the city, hoping to buy the medicine needed for his son. He returned with only two vials, enough for immediate treatment but far short for the necessary two-year treatment. In front of Ali is a letter from 8-year-old Meghan Good, who attends Pittsburgh (Pa.) Mennonite Church. The letter was part of a Mennonite Central Committee-organized campaign of support for the Iraqi people. An MCC delegation to Iraq delivered hundreds of such letters in March.

North American letters support Iraqi people

WINNIPEG—The patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church wept when he read some of the letters written by North Americans concerned about the plight of the Iraqi people.

Mennonite Central Committee earlier this year called for North Americans to write letters to Iraqis as tensions mounted between the United States and Iraq. The intention was to show that there are people in the West opposed to military actions and the brutal economic sanctions. Hundreds of letters have poured in and more are coming, says Ed Epp, director of MCC's Middle East programs.

An MCC delegation to Iraq delivered the letters in March. Some of the letters were translated into Arabic and passed on to the patriarch, an Iraqi who returned to his homeland for Easter.

"He was overcome by the compassion these Christians from North America were showing for the Iraqi people," Epp says.
—Rick Fast of MCC News Service

Rising to the top: Cream separator story highlights business owner's integrity

WINNIPEG—Neil DeFehr grew up around cream separators. In the 1930s and '40s, his grandfather, C.A. DeFehr, owned a Winnipeg appliance and furniture business that sold thousands of the shiny appliances to farm families across the Canadian prairies.

Besides his prominence in business, C.A. DeFehr also was a tireless church worker and one of the eight founders of Mennonite Economic Development Associates in 1953.

Today Neil DeFehr operates a property management business in Fresno, Calif. For his birthday last fall, one of the gifts he received was a small cream separator manufactured by a German company with which his grandfather had done business. The gift paid tribute to a long business friendship as well as to his grandfather's keen sense of integrity.

C.A. DeFehr & Sons had done business for some time with the German manufacturing company Westfalia, owned by the Habig family. In the summer of 1939, DeFehr placed an order for several train-carloads of cream separators. But by the time they arrived in Winnipeg, World War II had erupted and Canada and Germany were enemies.

The Canadian government notified DeFehr: "We have a shipment of cream separators in our possession. They come from Germany, our enemy, and we have seized them. The cream separators now belong to us, but we have no use for them, so you have first option to buy them from us."

When the war ended, C.A. DeFehr calculated the appreciated value of the investment and paid the now-sizable amount.

MEDA photo by Wally Kroeker

Neil DeFehr with his 65th birthday present: a cream separator from a German company and presented by the company's owner in honor of DeFehr's grandfather.

DeFehr bought the entire shipment for a tiny fraction of its value. When the war ended in 1945, he re-established contact with Westfalia and told them that DeFehr & Sons still owed payment on the separators.

DeFehr had kept track of the debt during the war years. He had subtracted the nominal amount he paid the Canadian government and reinvested the balance in his company. When the war ended, he calculated the appreciated value of the investment and paid the now-sizable amount.

For the Habig family, the money was an unexpected windfall, helping them rebuild their lives. For DeFehr, paying the debt, even when there was no legal obligation to do so, was simply part of what it meant to be a Christian in business.

While cream separators eventually disappeared from view, the DeFehr and Habig families remained close. As a youngster, Neil DeFehr corresponded with Gunter Habig, one of the younger family members. In 1955, DeFehr and his bride visited Germany on their honeymoon and stayed with the Habigs. They have stayed in regular contact.

When DeFehr turned 65 last fall, Gunter Habig traveled to Fresno to help him celebrate, bringing along a gift: a small cream separator, manufactured in 1932, the year of Neil's birth.

The gift symbolized a long friendship, and an act of integrity that transcended acts of war.—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

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Mennonite workers hope, pray for new start for Northern Ireland

ELKHART, Ind.—It was a good Friday indeed.

Mennonite workers in Ireland and Northern Ireland responded with tears and cautious optimism to the signing on April 10, Good Friday, of an agreement that could lead to peace for Northern Ireland.

While the agreement is by no means a peace accord, it does provide "a framework for the future where lasting peace may emerge," says Joe Campbell, coordinator of all Mennonite work in Ireland. Hope continues to build as a newspaper poll showed majorities of voters in both Ireland and Northern Ireland—and majorities of both Catholics and Protestants—saying they will support the agreement in simultaneous referendums on May 22.

Despite the significance of the agreement, the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland have not the agreement with euphoria. "People may not dare to express their hopes for peace, having been disappointed so often, but people are quietly and tenaciously clinging to that hope," says David Moser, a joint appointee of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) and the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) who serves as a pastor and works at reconciliation in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Moser, who describes the agreement as "a political miracle in Northern Ireland," says, "If the document isn't ratified, I despair to think what could happen in Northern Ireland. If the agreement is ratified, it is equally clear that the real work of building peace will have to begin. ... Political parties that have been longtime enemies will have to learn to work together on issues of common interest, and the society as a whole will have to learn how to work together in new ways."

Campbell tells how his family huddled with "watery eyes" around their television set in Belfast to watch the live broadcast of the signing of the agreement.

"We knew something new was trying to be born," says Campbell, a joint appointee of MBM and Mennonite Central Committee. "Yes, we have a new dawn, but with huge challenges ahead, not in the least in how we see ourselves. ... Can we let go of the past and reach a new beginning? I hope so for my children's sake.

"The church has a central role in this aspect and will need to rise to the challenge. Forgiveness is a hard road. Forgive and forget is not an option."

But there are also no guarantees of a peaceful resolution to 30 years of "the Troubles." "It is far, far from certain," says Joe Liechty, MBM worker in Dublin, Ireland. "Pray a lot."—*Tom Price for MBM, MCC and GCMC news services*

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CPT to increase force size

CHICAGO—Christian Peacemaker Teams will expand its number of full-time workers from 12 to 18 by 2000, the CPT steering committee has decided. The move is designed to increase participation of Canadians and ethnic minorities.

"We are more effective when teams represent a variety of ethnic styles and colors," says CPT director Gene Stoltzfus. "Each tradition brings special gifts of prophetic energy."—*CPT News Service*

Vinit Knox and his family barely survive the Union Carbide gas leak in Bhopal, India, and go on to serve the Lord.

A narrow escap

by Helen Kornelsen

Photo courtesy of Helen Kornelsen

Preaching to the poor: Vinit Knox at his church

On Sunday, Dec. 2, 1984, a small group of Christians gathered for prayer in Bhopal in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. They spent several hours, from 3 to 7:30 p.m., in prayer. Vinit Knox's brother Ruben had arrived that morning from Ambikapur to pay them a visit, which made this day special for the family. Following the prayer meeting, they returned to their home. After supper they sat and visited for a while, and by 10 they were in bed.

Then the unexpected happened. At 2:30 a.m. on Dec. 3, Vinit awoke to the sound of people running past his house. They were shouting something he could not understand. His son, Willy, also woke up, crying. Vinit and Innis, his wife, got up to see what was going on. Soon an overpowering, acrid smell left them choking. It assailed them like black pepper thrown onto a fire. It had the smell of burning wool. It was both burning and painful in its impact.

Outside, people were still running and screaming. Vinit ran to the nearby mosque to ask the watchman what was going on.

"Gas is leaking from the Union Carbide plant," the watchman said, gasping.

"Gas?"

"Yes! Yes!" the watchman rasped. "It's about 40 or 50 kilometers from the plant by now. You'd better run for your life."

> Vinit knew that if they stopped, they too would be pushed over and trampled underfoot or be driven over by other vehicles. Holding tight to her son, Innis wept and prayed.

As Vinit rushed back to the house, he remembered that their prayer meeting had been just across from the Carbide plant. No one had suspected anything. At his house he had to hold onto the wall for support. He felt weak and dizzy.

"Quickly! Quickly!" He roused his family. "We have to flee or we will die."

Lately he had had trouble starting his motorcycle. Would it start now? With one kick it started up. Innis, holding 3-year-old Willy, Ruben and Vinit all got onto the motorcycle. Off they sped to the main road.

To their horror they found the main road jammed with people running, fleeing, stumbling, falling. Vehicles sped over the dead on the road. More and more people crowded onto the road. Some tried futilely to help the weak, but they had to abandon them when the crush became too great.

Vinit found it impossible to make headway. In front of him he saw a father leading a 6-year-old boy by one hand and a 3-year-old by the other. A young girl fell down and lay still, dead. As Vinit came to a stop, a vehicle behind him bumped him so hard that he pushed the motorcycle right over the lifeless body of the girl. Panic and fear had no room for compassion. The uppermost thought on everyone's mind was to save one's life at all costs.

Vinit knew that if they stopped, they too would be pushed over and trampled underfoot or be driven over by the other vehicles. Holding tight to her son, Innis wept and prayed.

Then they ran out of gas. Vinit had wondered how long it could last. He marveled that it had lasted as long as it had. Only Sunday morning he had poured two liters of petrol into his motorcycle. He and Ruben had driven out to a village about 40 kilometers away to look for the son of the carpenter Jehoshaphet of Jagdeeshpur. The boy had run away and disappeared for several years. The parents had recently learned of their son's whereabouts and had asked Vinit to find him. They learned that the young man lived about 200 kilometers away. They had returned without him but had used up a lot of gas in making the trip.

Fortunately, Vinit was now near a village where they might be able to get gas. They found a petrol pump station. Then Vinit remembered that he had no money with him. In the hurry of leaving he hadn't thought of money. The owner, a Muslim, was filling the tanks for other people. Vinit approached him. Without a question, the Muslim filled his tank and waved him on. Under the circumstances he wanted no money. He provided free gas for others, too. Vinit had already decided that if they did not get gas, they would all have to walk and leave the vehicle there. The Lord had provided, had not forsaken them.

Vinit and his family decided to wait in the village for further word about the tragedy in Bhopal. At 10 a.m. word came that it was safe to return. The gas leakage had been stopped.

Wearily people began the trek back to Bhopal. Vinit and his family went directly to Nathan Sona's house. Mrs. Sona, a nurse, rushed Vinit to the hospital, where she worked. By then he was gravely ill. He was given antibiotic injections because the doctors did not know how to treat gas victims.

No sooner had their fears calmed than once again the cry went up: "More gas leakage!" The nurse giving Vinit his injections threw the needle away and fled. The doctors, too, left their patients and sought safety.

Vinit and his family ran back to Sona's house. Many others had fled there as well. Vinit had become so weak he couldn't have run any farther. All gathered in one of the rooms in the Sona home and spent their time in prayer.

Vinit's family stayed on in Sona's home. On Dec. 10, at 9:30 p.m., Vinit became seriously ill and was again rushed to the hospital. The doctor told the family he could feel neither pulse nor heartbeat. They feared the worst.

But God had further plans for Vinit's life. The crises passed, and life and strength were restored. Returning to their home at last, the Knoxes found that some of the odor remained in the rooms. Gradually, normalcy returned.

In the days that followed, army trucks loaded 40,000 bodies and threw them into the Nirmada River. The government issued orders to people not to drink the water from the contaminated river or eat any fish from it or even eat the vegetables from garden and market. All had been affected by the gas leakage.

Now, 14 years later, Vinit still experiences adverse physical effects. All the family's income goes to pay for the illnesses that beset them. Innis and Willy, too, often experience severe chest pains. Vinit had two heart attacks between 1990 and 1992. But that has not slowed him down. His enthusiastic and successful preaching ministry brought him to the attention of the other pastors in Bhopal. He was ordained in the St. John's Church on May 9, 1992, and given charge of this Church of North India congregation on July 29, 1992. He was also asked to pastor the Sihor congregation. After some time, he felt the need to move on and do what his heart called him to do, to preach to the poor.

In the days that followed, army trucks loaded 40,000 bodies and threw them into the Nirmada River.

Helen Kornelsen, Watrous, Sask., is a former mission worker in India with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

God did not forsake him

With a bachelor of commerce degree under his belt and 200 rupees in hand, Vinit Knox bade farewell to his family and set out from Ambikapur, India, to Bhopal, to try his fortune in the world.

He was young, full of hope. But months later he had found no work. At night he sought refuge on the street, in a busy depot or on a railway platform, wrapped in a single sheet. Sometimes he feared dying of exposure to the cold.

His father, Paulus Kumar, had been a cook for missionaries. Vinit recalled stories he had heard of Mr. and Mrs. S.T. Moyer, who had been in charge of Jansen Memorial School in Jagdeeshpur.

He remembered Mennonite missionaries Anne Penner and Helen Kornelsen sitting together in church. Miss Kornelsen had challenged the children to a Bible verse memory contest. A hundred prescribed Bible verses recited from memory earned a child a New Testament. Vinit smiled as he recalled bringing home a New Testament.

He still remembered the verses. One had lately taken on special meaning, Psalm 23:4: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." Another was Hebrews 13:5-6: "Never will I leave you: never will I forsake you. ... The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

God did not forsake him. After four months he was accepted as a clerk in a State Bank of India.

Even in his desperation he had not forsaken the church. It had meant walking three to four kilometers, but Sunday had remained special to him.

On Dec. 28, 1980, three years after he first came to Bhopal, he married Innis. Their first child, Willy, was born on Nov. 10, 1981. A daughter, Sheron, completed their family on Dec. 15, 1988.

Vinit still remembers when the Lord called him to the preaching ministry. It was on Feb. 23, 1984, at 7:30 p.m. From that time onward, preaching the Word of God, sharing the joyful news of salvation in Jesus Christ, has been his greatest delight. He is particularly concerned that the poor hear the gospel.—*Helen Kornelsen*

Photo courtesy of Helen Kornelsen

Greatest delight: Vinit Knox preaches to his congregation in Bhopal, India.

A search for faithfulness

Should conferences discipline noncomplying congregations?

by Tim Schrag, Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and David Brubaker

Powerfully evident in the outpouring of letters regarding the church's response to homosexuality is the desire to be faithful. Should conferences discipline noncomplying congregations? What does Scripture have to say? What have we done in our historical practice? What principles can we find to guide us as we move toward integration? This article examines the biblical record, surveys our history and suggests guiding principles to address these questions.

Biblical record: Does the Bible promote the idea that regional associations of churches are to discipline other congregations? The New Testament urges the discipline of individual members but does not urge the same for entire congregations. The New Testament fervently upholds high standards of conduct for believers. The Sermon on the Mount, Acts 5, 1 Corinthians 4-8 and Romans 1-2 are representative chapters that show we are to strive for holy living within our fellowship. Believers are to involve ourselves in each other's lives and engage in accountability and discipline.

Nevertheless, none of the above answers the question. This idea is not specifically mandated in the Bible. It does not appear that there was any instance of a group of churches disfellowshipping a congregation. This does not make such a practice wrong, but neither is it a biblical mandate or practice.

However, the New Testament is not a record of unbridled congregationalism. At least some centralized authority existed, as evidenced by Acts 15. The Jerusalem council took matters of congregational practice under advisement and issued a letter of counsel.

Paul became a visible sign of centralized authority. He was conference minister, author of the confession of faith and conference treasurer all in one. And he leaves little room for doubt that erring congregations need to be corrected. His correspondence assumes his right to speak words of correction.

But what does he say? On the one hand, he uses words like "admonish," "beseech," "warn," "wrath" and "judgment." No one can accuse the Apostle Paul of taking an "anything goes" stance. He exhorts specific congregations to exercise discipline internally (the church in Corinth, for example) and warns congregations not to be lax in this regard.

But after delivering such words and warnings, Paul consistently leaves the enforcement of judgment to God. His message promises God's punishment for sin. Yet after his sternest words, Paul also promises to continue his relationship with the churches through letters and visits. Never does Paul give up on even the most abominable congregation.

Paul's stance toward leaders, however, differs from his attitude toward congregations. It appears he has less tolerance for those who lead others astray. Paul names offenders and makes it clear he will work hard to see that unacceptable leadership is thwarted. He is more willing to exercise discipline over leaders than over congregations.

It was more than 1,500 years after this early church that Anabaptist congregations emerged and began to associate with each other. More centuries passed before area conferences emerged in the United States, along with their disciplinary practices.

It is often assumed that the practice of disfellowshipping congregations was the norm throughout this history. A closer look seems to negate this assumption. Few congregations have actually been disfellowshipped. Perhaps the two best known examples are the Oak Grove congregation in Smithville, Ohio, in 1947 and the Ames, Iowa, congregation in 1987. The Ohio Conference, with a humble apology, received Oak Grove back into membership in 1970.

There are many more examples of resourceful conflict resolution than hurtful and divisive fights in our conference histories.

Congregations and conferences did part ways with some frequency. But the pattern of separation typically was not one of the conference disciplining the congregation. Rather one reads words like "asked to be released," "withdrew," "was granted a release," "did not join the conference movement" and "separated by mutual agreement."

Disciplining leaders: Conferences did, at times, expel a credentialed leader, an action that sometimes almost compelled a congregation to withdraw or comply. In turn, these leaders often took members and even entire congregations with them. Such was one of the best-known splits, the 1847 departure of John Oberholtzer from the Franconia Conference. Sixteen ordained men and about a quarter of the membership withdrew with him. That 1847 group become the Eastern District, and by 1860 Oberholtzer helped organize the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC).

The GC history is similar in principle to that of the Mennonite Church (MC), but that history offers even less precedent for conference discipline of congregations. While on paper there is little difference between the two polity structures, the common ethos among GC congregations includes a self-definition that almost precludes expelling congregations.

Discipline of leaders, however, has happened periodically.

The Mennonite church has always faced contentious issues such as recent questions of members in the military, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality and women in leadership. Earlier issues included Sunday school, salaried ministers, instrumental music and questions of dress. Ample opportunity has existed for division. What is striking in this history, however, is how seldom disagreements have escalated to the point of expulsion of a congregation. Our history abounds with stories of conferences that have not split or even fought over these issues, despite differences in deeply held convictions. Thoughtful people came to wise solutions to what seemed on the surface irresolvable issues. There are many more examples of resourceful conflict resolution than hurtful and divisive fights in our conference histories.

Over the years there have been various models of conference discipline in GC and MC history, none of which has emerged as historically dominant or exclusively biblical. Various options are possibilities for faithfulness. As we struggle with current issues we need to employ openness, creativity and wisdom in our discernment of faithful responses.

Guidance in the struggle: What, then, can guide us as we try to discern the best model for conference / congregational polity in the new denomination? We offer three principles.

1. As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe he is our supreme model of faithful engagement with difficult issues and with each other. Jesus constantly clarified his beliefs and his purpose, especially with his closest followers. While tolerating a large range of mistakes and misunderstandings from his disciples, he used these as an opportunity to teach more faithful conduct. He lived and taught a divine balance of clarity of purpose, accountable integrity and unconditional love.

The search for answers in the integration process must be tempered with humility. As we seek to follow Christ, we often arrive at different answers to the same questions. To be human is not to have all the right answers, and churches are human beings knit together in Christ. We still "see as in a glass darkly."

One side of faithfulness compels us to boldness, clarity, decisive action. But faithfulness requires an equal portion of humility. Humility brings openness to the particulars of a situation, as well as to nuance, paradox, disagreement, uncertainty and patient waiting. A wise thinker once said, "The quest for certainty is the basis of all idolatry." Only God is all-knowing, and a realization of our inadequacy appropriately brings us to our knees daily to seek God's wisdom.

2. Conferences have the right and obligation to state and commend the core values of the organization. There is a time and place to speak corporately. A faithful group must constantly seek to refine its vision and restate its central convictions. Words of admonishment, correction, counsel and encouragement properly come from conferences to the member congregations. A conference may thus "stand for something" in a clear way that offers guidance to individual congregations. But there is a difference between "proclaiming the word" and forcing a dissenting congregation into compliance or risk loss of its membership in the group. From the biblical text and our historical record, rarely, if ever, is it justified for a conference to disfellowship a congregation.

3. Conferences and denominations do, however, bear responsibility for the ethical and legal conduct of their credentialed leaders. This responsibility seems to parallel New Testament models. Area conferences hold ministerial credentials, and pastors are accountable to the conference for the leadership they give a congregation. Conferences appropriately investigate and deal with allegations of serious professional misconduct or abuse, for example.

From the Bible and our historical record, rarely, if ever, is it justified for a conference to disfellowship a congregation.

When the position of a conference/denomination on a theological or doctrinal issue and the stance of a credentialed leader differ, however, it calls for a more nuanced response. Disagreement is natural, the necessary stuff of learning and growth. Many current majority positions originated in thoughtful minority dissent. But active, deliberate leading of a congregation in opposition to conference norms should bring the conference into conversation with such leaders. The parameters and purposes of such conversation need more discussion. Even we authors differ about what would be appropriate. There must be a healthy medium between "anything goes" and "witch hunts."

What, then, should be the conference/congregation relationship in the new denomination? Should conferences discipline noncomplying congregations? Based on our biblical and historical study, we believe conferences need to define clearly their vision and values. We believe they need to walk with and help guide the leaders they credential. Most importantly, we believe those relationships and any appropriate discipline must be firmly rooted in humility and love.

Tim Schrag is pastor at Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.) Carolyn Schrock-Shenk is director of Mennonite Conciliation Service, a program of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. in Akron, Pa. David Brubaker is a self-employed mediator, consultant and trainer based in Casa Grande, Ariz., who specializes in congregational conflict intervention.

This article emerged from conversations initiated at a Mennonite Conciliation Service consultation Jan. 9-10 called "Homosexuality in Our Churches: Process, Polity and Leadership."

Bluffton professor named peace lecturer

Perry Bush, associate professor of history at Bluffton (Ohio) College, has been named the 22nd annual C. Henry Smith Peace Lecturer at Bluffton and Goshen (Ind.) colleges. Bush presented "Vietnam and the Burden of Mennonite History" at Goshen on April 1 and at Bluffton on April 28.

Bush's speech covers the role of Mennonites serving in Vietnam during U.S. military action there and addresses what it means to be a Mennonite today and in the 21st century.

The lecture program is sponsored by Bluffton and Goshen. Smith served on the faculty and administration at both schools. He also wrote six books on Mennonite history, including *The Story of the Mennonites.*

Conference minister, church planter dies at 68

TEMPE, Ariz.—Don Yoder, conference minister for the Arizona area of Pacific Southwest Conference, died April 14 after struggling for several months with acute leukemia. He was 68.

Yoder was director of church planting for the Commission on Home Ministries from 1982 to 1989. Prior to that, he was the first lead pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz., from 1964 to 1976. He then planted Koinonia Mennonite Church in Chandler, Ariz., in 1976. After leaving CHM, Yoder returned to pastor Koinonia until 1996. *—GCMC News Service*

Bible school closer to accreditation

IRWIN, Ohio—Rosedale Bible Institute, affiliated with the Conservative Mennonite Conference, is halfway to accreditation with the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. Following a Feburary meeting with Rosedale officials, the AABC granted the school candidacy status. Rosedale, which started the process four years ago, hopes to receive full accreditation in 2002. A self-study will be conducted in two years.*—Brotherhood Beacon*

Goshen hosts forum on race issues

GOSHEN, Ind.—Nearly 150 college and community people gathered on the Goshen College campus April 7 to answer the question of whether Goshen is a safe place for ethnic and racial groups to live, work and study.

The forum was part of President Clinton's race initiative. Colleges and universities were asked by the President's Advisory Board on Race to lead the way in developing community dialogue on race issues. The Goshen forum was sponsored by a college committee working at race issues.

Thrift store workers make $45,000 find

BRANDON, Man.—A Mennonite Central Committee thrift shop recently presented MCC with a treasure found in trash: $45,000 in cash (about $32,000 in U.S. funds).

Workers at Community Self Help in Brandon had been sorting through a donated bag of clothes when they found wads of bills. The money was turned in to the police, who held it for the required one year. Since no one claimed the money, it was returned to the store. Store workers presented the money to MCC Canada in November.*—Mennonite Weekly Review*

Longtime mission worker honored for teaching

NEWTON, Kan.—Lubin Jantzen, who served with the Commission on Overseas Mission from 1946 to 1983, has been named the 1998 Sunday school teacher of the year by the Kansas Leadership and Sunday School Convention. Jantzen, who lives in Hesston, Kan., is a member of First Mennonite Church in Newton.*—GCMC News Service*

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Events

Rocky Mountain Conference annual meeting, May 1-3, Cheraw, Colo.
Council on Church and Media annual convention, June 4-6, Chicago.
Mediation and Facilitation Training Institute, June 15-19, Denver. Sponsor: Mennonite Conciliation Service. Contact: 717-859-3889, MCS@mccus.org.
Pacific Northwest Conference annual meeting, June 18-21, Aberdeen, Idaho.

Workers

Bontreger, Ken, ended a pastorate on March 29 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind. He has begun a pastorate at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.
Buckwalter, Henry began March 16 as associate director of Eastern Mennonite Missions Home Ministries, Salunga, Pa.
Chupp, James was licensed March 8 as youth minister at Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.
Roth, Mark was ordained March 22 as assistant pastor at Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church, Preston, Miss.
Ulloa, Antonio began March 16 as associate director of Eastern Mennonite Missions Home Ministries, Salunga, Pa.

Births

Anderson, Kathrine Elizabeth, March 28, to Aimee (Scheetz) and John Anderson, Telford, Pa.
Dutchersmith, Magdalena Ruth, March 24, to Kent and Teresa Dutchersmith, Elkhart, Ind.
Landis, Jonathan Keith, March 24, to Keith and Lois (Kaufman) Landis, Sterling, Ill.
Lehman, Caroline Hevener, March 18, to Anne Hevener and Keith Lehman, Cincinnati.
Lehman, Derrick Ian, March 18, to Annette (Zehr) and Peter Lehman, Copenhagen, N.Y.
Lehman, Kyrra Ann, March 25, to Dawn (Hardt) and Todd Lehman, Dayton, Wash.
Nalle, Elijah Baker, March 31, to Julia (Arnold) and Rob Nalle, Palmyra, Va.
Ramirez, Sidney Evan, March 25, to Shawn and Tara (Short) Ramirez, Archbold, Ohio.
Rowley, Shalee Wilder, March 19, to Karla (Wilder) and Larry Rowley, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Shafer, Jordan Noah, March 25, to Donna (Nisly) and Jerry Shafer, Hutchinson, Kan.
Shank, Jacob Allen, March 25, to Roger and Ruth (Horst) Shank, Sterling, Ill.
Taylor, Lake Samuel Alan, Jan. 9, to Todd and Tracy Taylor, Newport, Wash.
Troyer, Tobiath Steven, Jan. 17, to Jeanette (Lehman) and Steven Troyer, Chambersburg, Pa.
Wilkins, Rebecca Anne, March 22, to Janet (Kauffman) and Joe Wilkins, West Liberty, Ohio.

Marriages

Geiser/Neuenschwander: Carl Geiser, Orrville, Ohio, and Beulah Neuenschwander, Dalton, Ohio, March 21, by Terry Shue.
Holder/Parker: Will R. Holder, Durham, N.C., and Adrienne Parker, Durham, March 7, by Paul Godshall.
Reihs/Warrington: Jeffrey Reihs, Manhattan, Kan., and Christy Warrington, Hutchinson, Kan., March 28, by Howard L. Wagler.

Deaths

Becker, Ella, 93, Aberdeen, Idaho, died April 1. Burial: April 6 at Aberdeen by Monty Ledford.
Gerber, Galen, 70, Strasburg, Ohio, died March 25 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Mary Lou; children Sye Jackson, George Jackson and Dianne Skelly; 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: March 26 at Walnut Creek, Ohio, by Ross Miller.
Goossen, Martha Doell, 88, Henderson, Neb., died March 29. Survivors: children LaRue, Warren; four grandchildren. Burial: April 2 at Henderson by John Yoder-Schrock.
Miller, Shirley K. Kulp, 69, North Wales, Pa., died March 15, of lung cancer. Survivors: husband, Harold; children Lucinda, Heather Ferrence; parents, Harry and Clara Kulp. Burial: March 18 at Hatfield, Pa., by Michael Meneses and Hubert Schwartzentruber.
Rudy, Abner, 94, New Hamburg, Ont., died Feb. 4. Survivors: children Carl, John, Betty Busehert, Willis, Elvin, Doreen Good, Karen Bergey, Harold, Barbara Stager; 26 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 8 at Waterloo, Ont., by Glyn Jones.
Schrag, Frances Musselman, 84, Pretty Prairie, Kan., died March 11. Survivors: husband, Erwin; children Sam, Don, Janette Zercher; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: March 14 at Pretty Prairie by Elmer Wall.
Schweitzer, Dan E., 84, Beaver Crossing, Neb., died March 19 of a heart attack. Survivors: children Leonard, Darrel, Ann Andrews; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: March 23 at Milford, Neb., by Marlin Kym.
Showalter, Richard, 78, Chino Valley, Ariz., died March 14 of a stroke. Survivors: wife, Genevieve; children Nancy Redding, Rebecca Hynds, Miriam Phillips, Lois Sperry, Ruth Robinson, Benjamin, David; 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: March 18 at Prescott, Ariz., by Ray Keim.
Snyder, Margaret V. Kauffmann, 82, Albany, Ore., died March 14 of cancer. Survivors: children Carl, Ken, Myron; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: March 21 at Salem, Ore., by Lynn Miller and Carl Newswanger.
Summer, Dennis, 90, Ashley, Mich., died March 19 of a heart attack. Burial: March 21 by Joe Pendleton.
Troyer, Beulah Mae, 85, Harper, Kan., died Jan. 17. Burial: Jan. 20 at Harper by Vernon Whitmore.

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Dock Woods Community, a growing CCRC near Lansdale, Pa., Montgomery County, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***manager-human resources.*** This position plans, organizes and manages the human resource department for our community. A bachelor's degree in human resource management or related field is required. Experience in the long-term care field is a plus.

Send resume and salary requirements to: Edward D. Brubaker, executive director, Dock Woods Community, 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446.

Penn Foundation, a private behavioral health-care facility affiliated with Mennonite Health Services, seeks fee-for-service ***psychiatrist*** to perform initial evaluations and medication reviews. Located in scenic Upper Bucks County, 40 miles north of Philadelphia, our diversified community-oriented practice serves suburban-rural areas of Sellersville, Newtown and Langhorne. Our multidisciplinary staff includes eight staff psychiatrists. Services include a comprehensive outpatient and partial hospital, 26-bed inpatient unit with active consultation service and 27-bed inpatient substance abuse treatment center. Board certification and experience with adults and children preferred.

Please send CV to Vernon H. Kratz, M.D., Penn Foundation, P.O. Box 32, Sellersville, PA 18960; 215-257-6551. EOE

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church seeks applicants for the position of half-time ***church administrator.*** Responsibilities include oversight of finances and nonministerial staff, stewardship education, facilities maintenance and development.

Send letter of application, resume, transcript and three references to Marsha Yoder, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista Street, Sarasota, FL 34232.

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church: The search committee of Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., is seeking resumes of people interested in serving as ***minister of youth and young adults.***

Candidates should submit their resume or letter of interest by May 22 to A. Jerome Yoder, chair, Search Committee, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232.

Landis Homes has a full-time opening for a ***director of marketing and admissions.*** Qualifications include training in social work, marketing or a related field. Experience working in a retirement community or long-term care operation preferred. Position begins around June 1.

Contact Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543 or call 717-581-3936.

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To apply, send resume and references to Clark Roth, director of admissions, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information email clarkr@hesston.edu or phone 1-800-995-2757. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Little Eden Camp, Onekama, Mich., member of Mennonite Camping Association, seeks full-time positions in ***food service*** and voluntary service as ***generalists.*** Positions available August. For more information, call 616-889-4294 or email LittleEden@juno.com.

Urgent: Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the position of ***producer relations director*** for Ten Thousand Villages, based in Akron, Pa. This is a two-year, full-time position starting May 1, 1998. Qualifications include a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Applicants should have a college degree (MBA preferred), overseas experience, experience with retail and marketing and good communications and organizational skills. Travel required.

For more information, or to receive a copy of the job description, please contact Dwight McFadden, 21 S. 12th St., P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; 717-859-1151; email djm@mcc.org. Apply immediately.

Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare, provider of behavioral health services affiliated with Lancaster Mennonite Conference, is seeking candidates for top ***human resources*** position. Master's degree in HR or related field and three years experience in human resource leadership role, preferably within health care.

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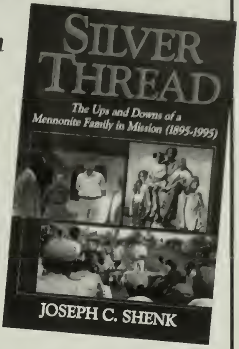
SILVER THREAD
The Ups and Downs of a Mennonite Family in Mission (1895-1995)
JOSEPH C. SHENK

Silver Thread: The Ups and Downs of a Mennonite Family in Mission (1895-1995), by Joseph C. Shenk

Silver Thread is a Mennonite mission love story, told with forthright grace and an eye on the realities of learning to live with different cultural understandings.

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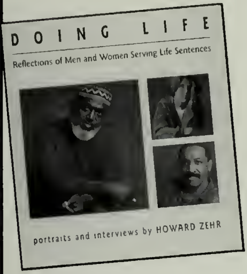
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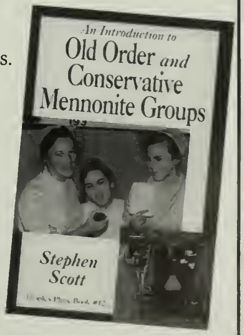
An Introduction to Old Order and Conservative Mennonite Groups
by Stephen E. Scott



In this landmark book, with many anecdotal stories and photographs, Scott explains the fascinating history of these two growing groups of Mennonite peoples. Some observers believe they may some day outnumber the "mainline" groups.

Late in the 19th century, a major segment of the Mennonite church divided primarily over participation in Sunday schools, revival meetings, and the rapid acceptance of English in church life. They were called Old Order Mennonites.

In the mid-20th century, another significant separatist movement developed, mostly from concern over what was considered compromise with the world and its rapidly changing systems. These are the Conservative Mennonites groups.

"I was stimulated by Scott's chronicle yet abashed that so much of it came to me as news. For it contains, as surely as our mainstream histories, the perennial tensions of Mennonite identity." —Susan Fisher Miller in *Mennonite Weekly Review*

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Rich Preheim

Lessons under the sun

Yesterday it was slavery, communism and pool halls. Today it is abortion, economic justice and *Ellen*. And who knows what tomorrow will bring.

Although the particulars may change, trials and tribulations are a constant for all Christians, no matter where they are on the religious, cultural and political spectrums. As Ecclesiastes says: "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun" (1:9 NRSV).

So when people claim the current age as the worst of times, it begs for a response. The most recent, but certainly not only, example comes from Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ fame, who says, "There has never been a greater need in all of history to fast, pray, repent and seek the face of God." Bright and others cite crime, persecution of Christians and political corruption. These are among many profound concerns needing our attention, but they don't necessarily mean our world is going down the drain faster than ever before. And that has implications for our perceptions and actions.

Consider the lessons of history.

For sheer injustice, look at the United States' treatment of entire peoples: the displacement and slaughter of Native people, the enslavement of blacks, the disenfranchisement of women, the World War II internment of Japanese-Americans, the often-deadly civil rights battles of the 1950s and beyond, the exploitation of immigrants, and more. These are not just political or social issues; these are moral ones to which the church generally responded with silence.

To herald the current age as the worst of times should not be our impetus for Christian witness.

The rise of the industrialists and robber barons in the last quarter of the 19th and early 20th centuries came at great human expense as workers put in 12- to 14-hour days for pennies a week. At the same time, Henry Clay Frick and his counterparts, who made millions of dollars, frequently responded to worker demands for better conditions and wages with violence, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

As we lament the massacres in Rwanda, Burundi and the former Yugoslavia of recent years, we must not forget Hitler's Holocaust, Pol Pot's reign of terror in Cambodia, the extermination of countless indigenous peoples in the Americas through the centuries and the Israelites' years in Egyptian captivity.

The public eye has been focused for some time now on President Clinton's moral shortcomings. While such conduct should not be excused, sexual escapades by our political leaders have been more commonplace than we care to admit, from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to John F. Kennedy and Gary Hart.

As for White House scandals, Ulysses S. Grant's administration is considered by many to be the most corrupt in history. Warren G. Harding's administration included Teapot Dome, probably the most notorious scandal until Watergate. And don't forget Iran-Contra.

And the history lessons could go on and on.

Meanwhile, some statistics show things are not necessarily getting worse. Sixty-nine percent of Americans were members of churches or synagogues in 1995, the same number as in 1990. And the number of Americans regularly attending worship services increased from 40 to 43 percent in that time.

The rates of abortions and teenage births have remained steady since the 1980s, and the number of divorces has dipped over the last 15 years. Municipal solid waste grew only 5.5 percent from 1990 to 1995 while waste recovery and recycling skyrocketed 66 percent.

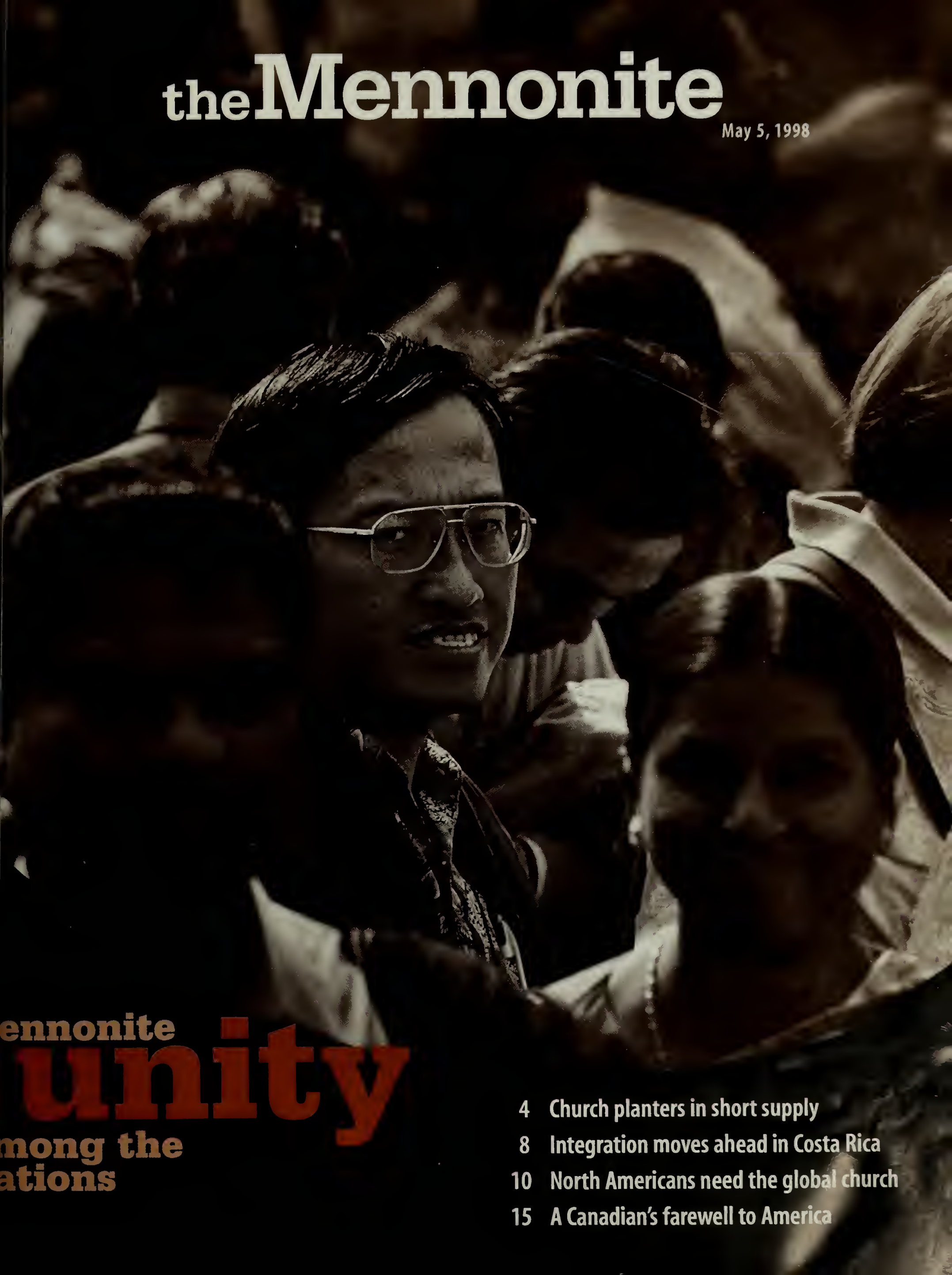
We have in the last 10 years witnessed the end of the Cold War, the dismantling of apartheid—both largely in nonviolent fashion—and the growth of the international church. All are reasons to rejoice.

There is still, however, much to be done. The number of single-parent households has more than doubled since 1970. The infant mortality rate for blacks is almost twice that for whites. The gap between rich and poor continues to widen. And countless souls are waiting to hear the Good News.

But to herald the current age as the worst of times, in addition to being wrong, should not be our impetus for Christian witness. We are to be agents of healing and hope in a broken world, not so much because of the severity of the world's brokenness but because of our faithfulness to the God of history, for whom any fissure, no matter how minute, is a violation of what was first declared good.—*rp*

the Mennonite

May 5, 1998



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4 Church planters in short supply
8 Integration moves ahead in Costa Rica
10 North Americans need the global church
15 A Canadian's farewell to America

The Mennonite **welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors***

Foundational power

I deeply appreciated Tobin Miller Shearer's article "What's in a Name?" (*The Mennonite,* April 14). He speaks as part of a generation—my generation—that has come to expect the rational world in which we live and the experiences of which he speaks to not go together. His experience of God's power and angelic visitation frightens us. (Maybe that is why angel accounts in the Bible so often begin with "fear not.") We have difficulty fitting God and angels into our worldview. The problem with our worldview is that it can blind us to God at work in history and time. Taken to its furthest logical conclusion, our worldview can lead us to a denial of the incarnation.

While the work of calling the church to a faithful stance regarding racism is very important, the essential power by which that happens is even more foundational. Tobin calls us to faithful service and the proclamation of truth empowered by the eternal reality and power of our triune God. While we must use our minds and grow academically, we must also learn to depend on our Creator and God. This is the message of hope that will transform us and our world. Thanks, Tobin, for sharing so candidly a prophetic message that we need to hear. —*Leon Miller, Lancaster, Pa.*

Choosing by the Spirit

Where is the feeling that we all will need to answer to a higher power than self? Where is the feeling that the Spirit of God is always present? Did God withdraw his Spirit? Or did people choose not to live by Christ's leading or his Word and are thereby not partaking of that divine nature? That divine nature is not influencing choice. It's not freeing us from choosing our own way.

Jesus says: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). A choice to continually live by his Word frees us from choosing our own ways. Do we know enough of his Word so the Holy Spirit can enlighten us on Christ's Word and then choose to live by that enlightened leading? Is self humble enough so it's leadable? —*Willard Becker, Freeman, S.D.*

Trivialization, fancy and whimsy

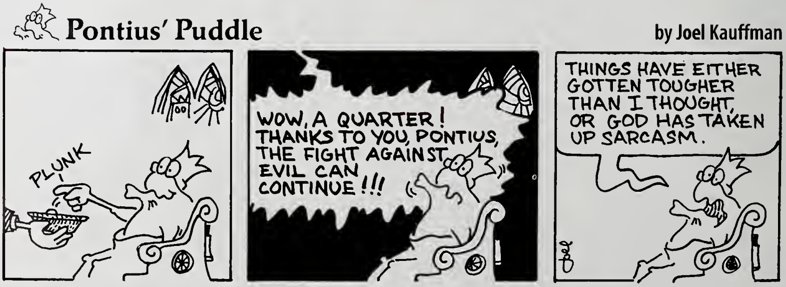
Please excuse my interruption over what is perhaps a point of order with limited significance, but is there an editor on the premises? If *The Mennonite* is approaching the weaning age and ready to begin accepting nominations for its 1998 Oops Awards, I nominate the aberrant inclusion of the sentence in David Steven's article "Do Not Hold Me" (*The Mennonite,* April 7): "Today [Jesus would] have a bandana, a Grateful Dead T-shirt and a weedwacker."

Implements and headgear aside, can a resurrected Jesus, who is too holy for Mary to touch, really be visualized in a garb advocating, or at least accepting, unholiness? The edifying message presented in the article in no way requires the inclusion of this secular illustration on the side. Its inclusion trivializes the extensive negative effect the Grateful Dead rock band had and continues to have on godly spirituality. The illustration itself is distasteful or obscure to many readers.

I think articles in *The Mennonite* based on the exegesis of a biblical text should continue to be presented in a scholarly fashion. The Bible is already sufficiently palatable. Its exegesis doesn't need to be spiced or diluted with secular fancy or whimsy.—*Hans Wenger, Lancaster, Pa.*

Rest in peace

The article and editorial about our good friend John Howard Yoder (*The Mennonite,* March 3) stirred fond memories of days at Goshen (Ind.) College as well as the year he spent here in Buenos Aires, Argentina, teaching at the Facultad de Teologia and among our Mennonite


Pontius' Puddle

by Joel Kauffman

PLUNK
WOW, A QUARTER! THANKS TO YOU, PONTIUS, THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL CAN CONTINUE!!!
THINGS HAVE EITHER GOTTEN TOUGHER THAN I THOUGHT, OR GOD HAS TAKEN UP SARCASM.

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Vol. 1, No. 11, May 5, 1998

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say readers say

churches. He was a very good exponent of the gospel of Christ and his way of peace and goodwill. I remember the confrontations he had every week with students who shared a Marxist sociology and the patience and love he exercised with them. Yoder had a firmness in insisting that Christ's way was the right way to walk.

But I also must say that it surprised and hurt me, and others here in Argentina, when you repeated in Yoder's obituary one big mistake he committed. We should let him rest at peace and remember his great contribution to all the church of Christ.—*Mario O. Snyder, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

I am grateful for comments such as Gerald Studer's (*The Mennonite*, April 7), reflecting on the immense influence of John Howard Yoder on all of Christendom. Studer speaks from his personal acquaintance with Yoder, and his response seems genuinely warmhearted, not judgmental.

It seems to me less than Christian for people without a personal acquaintance with Yoder to posthumously criticize this giant of a man and then sign their comments with "Name withheld." Accusers should drop their stones. Then they may walk away, withholding their names. *—Lydia Samatar, South Orange, N.J.*

Rereading the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:2-35, I was struck by its message: "This is how the heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Let us hear no more about the shortcomings of John Howard Yoder. Only if we have not been forgiven ourselves should we continue to withhold forgiveness from others.—*Elizabeth G. Yoder, Elkhart, Ind.*

Plentiful harvest but few workers

Church planters in short supply, mission leaders say

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.—Mennonite area conferences are looking for church planters but finding few with the aptitude for this specialized ministry—and fewer still with a heart for people who have never encountered the risen Christ.

"We have been working on planting a church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for the last three to four years," said Duane Richards, conference missions leader for Iowa-Nebraska Conference. "We have funds in place and the interest to start it, but we can't find a church planter."

Richards told of his conference's troubles at the annual meeting of General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church area conference mission leaders and staff, held April 18-21 and which drew more than 60 people. But Richards' wasn't the only such story. The same dilemma can be found in Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio and Oregon, where there are immediate openings for church planters.

"Why is it that not only Mennonites but others have trouble finding church planters, finding people who have apostolic hearts?" said Art McPhee, professor of mission and evangelism at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind. "It is because our hearts have grown dull that we don't see things happen in the way they did among the early Anabaptists or the early church or the first Pietists."

McPhee said this is true at AMBS, which strives to prepare people for church work. "I find that very few students who are coming into the seminary come with a strong interest in mission and evangelism," he said.

> We're not supposed to say anything. We'll do the relief sales [as though] somehow they give us a sense of absolution. ... That's wrong.
>
> *—Jim Egli*

MBM photo by Tom Price

John Powell (left), Mennonite Board of Missions director of evangelism and church development, blesses Margi and Darrel Sayer of Carstairs, Alta., as part of Powell's prayer during the closing worship of an annual gathering of area conference mission leaders April 18-21 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Keynote speaker Jim Egli, director of training for TOUCH Outreach Ministries in Houston and a consultant for the Living in Faithful Evangelism process, led meeting participants through a time of confession and repentance for Mennonites being "the quiet in the land."

Egli said Mennonites in Switzerland accepted an unwritten agreement that they would not be persecuted if they moved to farms about 7,000 feet in elevation. Meanwhile, Prussian Mennonites accepted Catherine the Great's offer to move to Russia so long as they didn't share their faith.

"There were deep compromises that were made within our history," Egli said. "What do we do with our ancestors who said, 'God, if it costs us that much, we're not going to be vocal'?"

And that quiet attitude continues today. "We're not supposed to say anything. We'll do the relief sales [as though] somehow they give us a sense of absolution," Egli said. "For generations we have hidden the treasure. That's wrong.

"We need to go before God and say, 'God, we're sinners. There's sin in our lives and in the churches. We recognize that as sin. We receive your forgiveness and we break the power of the evil one who came through that compromise."

The meeting was organized by the Commission on Home Ministries, Conference of Mennonites in Canada and Mennonite Board of Missions.—*Tom Price of MBM News Service*

Group has spiritual concerns about merger

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church Spirituality Reference Council is urging that the Integration Committee create a sub-committee to develop and communicate a spiritual and theological framework for the integration of the two denominations.

The council, holding its annual meeting April 2-3 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, expressed grave concern with the recently adopted one-denomination, two-country model. Because the theological and spiritual foundations for such a plan have not been addressed, the council says, many U.S. Mennonites will see it as a political concession to Canadian nationalism, and that will adversely affect the church in years to come.—*MBCM News Service*

New MWC Global History Project aims to inform, record stories for worldwide Mennonite church

STRASBOURG, France—As Anabaptist history continues to be made in Latin America, Africa and Asia, a new venture to record it is about ready to begin.

Work will soon begin on a volume about Latin America and the Caribbean, the first entry in the Mennonite World Conference (MWC)-sponsored Global Mennonite History Project. The project is expected to include six volumes —each about the Anabaptist-Mennonite history of a continental region—in the next 12 to 15 years. Scholars and historians around the globe will be paid for their research and writing.

Jaime Adrian Prieto Valladares, a university professor and member of the Costa Rica Mennonite Church, will soon begin interviewing for the Latin American and Caribbean history. A sabbatical will allow Prieto to begin writing next February. He teaches at the Latin American Biblical University in San Jose, Costa Rica, and also at SEMILLA, the Mennonite biblical and theological training program based in Guatemala City.

Coordinator John A. Lapp says the project had its genesis in a 1994 Mennonite World Conference report which for the first time showed that the majority of Anabaptists were outside North America and Europe. In April 1995, 19 scholars and administrators from 10 countries gathered at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., to discuss a global history of the Mennonite-Anabaptist movements. Participants noted the church's changing identity and that little has been done to assess Mennonite globalization. MWC assumed responsibility for the project.

The series will be used to inform North American and European Anabaptists, but also to record the beginnings of churches in the southern continents for use by members there.

"People in the new majority of the church need to be more aware of their stories for their own sense of who they are and for playing a more significant role in the world Anabaptist movement," says Lapp, a former college history professor and administrator and retired executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee.

At the 1997 MWC assembly in Calcutta, India, Prieto told a group that the goal of the project must be to give back to the people their own history. "It is fundamental that we write the history of our communities with the objective of strengthening our faith, increasing our communal spirit, becoming aware of where we come from and leaving a testimony of our participation in history," he said.

Pakisa K. Tshimika, a Congolese member of the 13-person organizing committee, says, "The history project should help developing churches develop a larger sense of belonging in the broader Mennonite family."

Each volume in the series will be published in English and in a language of the continental region covered. So Prieto's book will be in Spanish as well as English. Africa is tentatively planned to be the second volume. Total cost for the project is about $400,000. A matching grant from Mennonite Mutual Aid is funding much of the budget.—*Marshall V. King of MWC News Service*

The impetus for the Global History Project is the growing number of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in Africa, Asia and Latin America. A 1994 Mennonite World Conference report for the first time showed that the majority of members were outside North America and Europe. That trend continued in MWC's 1998 census, which for the first time reported the number of members had increased to more than 1 million. About 55 percent live in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The top six countries are the United States (287,345), Congo (175,837), Canada (128,633), India (87,466), Indonesia (62,823) and Ethiopia (57,011).

Ethiopian church to expand leadership training efforts

AGMSA, Ethiopia—The Mennonite conference in Ethiopia is planning to offer leadership training in the language spoken by about one-third of its membership.

The Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) plans to open an Oromo-language Bible school next year. The goal of the new program is to provide better Bible training for the rural areas of Wellega. "The fact that the churches of Wellega are growing requires additional leadership training," says Susan Godshall, Eastern Mennonite Missions director for Africa, who visited the area in February.

In the past, the Oromo-speaking MKC congregations in Wellega have sent leaders to the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa or even Tanzania for leadership training in Amharic, Ethiopia's official language, or in English. —*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

Raising their hosannas

Ken Millslagle

Worshipers celebrate Palm Sunday, April 5, outside Edwinase Mennonite Church in Edwinase, Ghana, the largest Mennonite congregation in the country, with more than 400 members. Many had to remain outside the church for the worship service because the building could not hold everyone. Also attending the service was a Mennonite Board of Missions team of seven Americans spending two weeks helping build a new meeting place for the congregation. After the worship servi[illegible]00 people paraded through Edwinase, many of them waving palm branches.

Once met with silence, abortion issue now generates advocacy, discussion

How times change. Abortion today is one of the hottest topics in society, church and politics. But 23 years ago, it could barely generate discussion among Mennonite Church General Assembly delegates.

January marked the 25th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. That led to the Mennonite Church's statement against abortion, which came to the delegates for action in 1975.

"When we put the statement on the floor, no one wanted to talk," recalls Robert Hartzler, then chair of the Council on Faith, Life and Strategy (CLFS), which wrote the statement. "We had to push for discussion. Finally some older women who were health practitioners stood and discussed matters of substance. The statement was adopted with no opposing votes."

Adds Don Jacobs, then another CLFS member: "Abortion wasn't causing dissention in the church. ... At that time, individual women's rights to their bodies were not an issue."

Anna Bowman, one of two women on CLFS in 1975, says the statement was written "prior to the pro-life, pro-choice polarization. We weren't as aware that the members of our churches were in a privileged position."

Abortion highlights the dilemmas of supporting legislation. The Mennonite Church statement says, "While we do not legislate morality for society, we should work toward making counsel concerning alternatives" to abortion.

Bowman, a social worker, says many women seeking abortions have not been taught to make responsible choices and do not have financial and emotional support when caught in an unplanned pregnancy. "As a denomination, we still know what we believe but face a new, different question: Do we have the right to make our beliefs the law of the land, especially when others aren't so privileged," she says.

"The policy aspects of abortion are complex," says J. Daryl Byler, director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office. "One thing is clear: If the church does speak to the legislative aspects of this issue, it will have the greatest integrity if it grows out of the church's ministry of providing alternatives to abortion."

Vicki Markley-Sairs, who publishes *Meribah,* a Mennonite pro-life magazine, says, "We've been good at providing for physical needs [of people caught by unplanned pregnancies] but weak in presenting our pro-life ideas in the marketplace."

An important way to decrease the need for abortions, Bowman says, is to give women a voice. "We need to put our energy into helping women find the voice to say no to men." Adds Doug Pritchard, a member of of the Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee, "Men also need to be responsible for their behavior and its consequences."

The General Conference Mennonite Church adopted a statement against abortion in 1980.—*MC Peace and Justice Committee*

ORRVILLE, Ohio—In the wake of recent court cases and legislation in both the United States and Canada, the Peace and Justice Committee of the Mennonite Church has requested that the MC General Board consider a statement on euthanasia. The request came during the committee's March 5-7 meeting.

The committee also reviewed guidelines for its new start-up grants for congregational peace initiatives. The committee has $10,000 from the General Board's 1997 Christmas Sharing Fund to be used for the Spread the Peace Grants. Funds granted to congregations will range from $200 to $1,000.—*MC General Board News Service*

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Sales report successes

Despite sogginess brought on by the infamous El Niño weather system, the West Coast Mennonite Sale and Auction, held April 3-4 at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University, raised $203,000, just $1,000 less than last year's fair-weather event. Meanwhile that same weekend in Harrisburg, Pa., the Pennsylvania Relief Sale netted $300,000, nearly $20,000 more than last year.

At the West Coast sale, the auction of 206 quilts, afghans and comforters brought $76,500. The high quilt sold for $4,000. The 410 comforters, quilts and wall hangings at the Pennsylvania sale raised $147,800. The top quilt brought $2,000.—*Kathy Heinrichs Wiest and MCC News Service*

Women work on crafts at Casa Refugio in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, the only shelter for abused women in the country. Mennonite Central Committee recently provided $10,000 in emergency funds to keep the shelter operating after a Swedish women's organization withdrew its support.

Needs great for women's shelter in Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras—Soledad was 19 when her stepfather first raped her and forced her to stay with him by threatening to kill her mother. Soledad bore five children with her stepfather.

" 'Don't leave the house. Honduras is very small. ... I'll find you,' he would tell me," Soledad recalls. "I told myself this was the life I was given and I had to accept it so my children could have a home."

But after 13 years of abuse, she found a new home through Casa Refugio, the only shelter for abused women in Honduras.

Anne Marie Sorenson, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) social worker from Ellensburg, Wash., works at the shelter. "It is motivating to be involved in a project that is so desperately needed and involved in a cause that is really on the cutting edge of social change in Honduran society," she says.

Despite the needs, Casa Refugio's work had been in peril. The shelter had received financial support for the last five years from a Swedish women's group. But that funding dried up this year. MCC has given $10,000 in emergency funding so the shelter can reopen its doors.

"A new law went into effect in February, and the cases of domestic violence reported to authorities has skyrocketed," Sorenson says. "The need for shelters is great."

According to Honduran government figures, four out of every 10 women are physically abused by their male partners.

One focus of Casa Refugio is working for change in a patriarchal culture. "Ideas of male dominance and superiority are prevalent in all aspects of the culture and are found among most people, regardless of the socioeconomic or educational level or even gender," Sorenson says. "Machismo serves to legitimize violence against women."

While her work can be both backbreaking and heartbreaking, Sorenson never has to look far to see success. A year has passed since Soledad left Casa Refugio and moved with her children to another city. But she still returns to Tegucigalpa every month to keep in touch.

"Now, I don't hide," Soledad wrote in a letter to the shelter, "and thanks to God and all the people who have supported me, everything is turning out well. ... You are my guardian angels who gave me the most beautiful gift of my life: my freedom!"—*John Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

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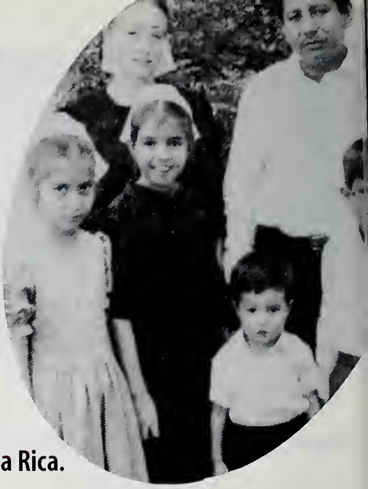
Correction: A quote about Mennonite Central Committee workers entering Iran was wrongly attributed in the article "For MCC Workers, Christian-Muslim Dialogue Shatters Stereotypes, Strengthens Faith" in the April 21 *The Mennonite*. The comment was made by Ed Epp.

Variety of family names: Chente Mejia, pastor at Iglesia Menonita Puerto Viejo, with his family



A fresh breath of life

Mennonite integration moves ahead in Costa Rica.

by John D. Roth

During the 1980s, a chicken processing plant owned by an Anglo member of the new Beachy Amish-Kleine Gemeinde church in Costa Rica grew rapidly to the point where it employed the majority of the local population and dominated the economy of the region. When tensions began to emerge between factory managers and workers—the majority of whom were native Costa Ricans—they inevitably found expression within the local congregation as well. In the early 1990s, church leadership began to regard the factory as an impediment to evangelization, and they asked the factory owner to scale back production or to sell his factory. When he refused, a painful split ensued within the church.

As Mennonites in North America debate the details of integration, a small, mission-minded Beachy Amish community in rural Costa Rica has already moved several steps beyond its more progressive cousins in the north. For more than a decade, families in the San Carlos region of Costa Rica bearing names like Yoder and Swartzentruber have gathered alongside the Friesens and the Duecks to worship with their Vargas and Carvajal neighbors. The story of how this cluster of 10 congregations has blended Pennsylvania Dutch-speaking Beachy Amish, the Plattdeutsch traditions of the Kleine Gemeinde and the native culture of Spanish-speaking Costa Ricans began almost 30 years ago.

In June 1968, three Beachy Amish families established a tiny settlement in La Fortuna, Costa Rica, in the shadow of Mount Arenal, one of the country's most active volcanoes. Under the leadership of Sanford Yoder, ordained as the first Beachy Amish "evangelist," the group intended to establish a new model of missions they called "evangelization through colonization." From the beginning, they resolved to be self-supporting, to commit themselves to long-term residence in Costa Rica and to adapt as much as possible to the native culture.

For the first eight years the settlement struggled for survival, supporting itself with cattle farming, truck gardens and the occasional influx of new energy and resources of other immigrants from the United States. Though their initial mission success was relatively meager, these early years were a crucial time of learning the Spanish language and becoming acclimated to Costa Rican customs and culture. In 1976, a new hydroelectric dam flooded the Arenal valley, and the small community relocated on grassy scrubland 50 miles west in the San Carlos region. At about the same time a group of Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites from Spanish Lookout Colony, Belize, purchased land nearby. Like the Beachy Amish, they had come to Costa Rica out of a deep interest in mission and made strenuous efforts from the start to learn Spanish.

During the next decade, the mission efforts of both groups bore fruit. But in 1985 a division within the Kleine Gemeinde group left them depleted of members and leadership. Recognizing their shared commitment to basic Anabaptist doctrines and a mutual passion for mission, the two groups agreed to merge. Today, the settlement has 10 congregations and nearly 500 members, some 60 percent of whom are native Costa Ricans.

One measure of the community's vitality is the energetic work of the Publicadora La Merced, a publication outreach that prints and distributes Spanish-language materials throughout Central and South America. In addition to several locally produced tracts and booklets, La Merced translates and publishes curriculum material for use in parochial schools, a periodical for teachers and a devotional magazine entitled *Antorcha de la Verdad*, with bimonthly circulation of nearly 30,000 copies, according to Duane Nisly. Some 1,700 copies of *La Antorcha* are sent regularly to Cuba, where the hunger for Anabaptist literature finds testimony in the dozens of letters they have received from small Christian communities there. Duane, a Hutchinson, Kan., native, has lived in Costa Rica for more than a decade as a pastor and the administrator of the press.

Names and accents: Another type of vitality may be read in the wide variety of family names and accents one encounters in the local congregations. To an amazing degree, Beachy Amish, Kleine Gemeinde and native Costa Ricans alike are bridging long-standing cultural, historical and linguistic divides; even more remarkable, they seem to have successfully hurdled the single biggest obstacle to cross-cultural relations: marriage. For nearly two decades, members of both the Beachy Amish and the Kleine

Gemeinde groups have married into Costa Rican families; now following the merger of the two denominations they have also begun marrying each other. "It is impossible to expect people to function at a church level if at marriage we draw the line and say no further," says Philip Yoder, who came to Costa Rica as one of Sanford Yoder's teenage sons and is now a bishop of the congregation in Santa Rita.

But in the next breath, he readily acknowledges that the past decade has not been without cross-cultural tensions. "The Kleine Gemeinde people have been extremely gracious," he says. "They have made a deliberate effort to fit in." Reuben Dueck, a deacon at the La Estrella congregation, says much the same thing about the Beachy Amish, though he also notes that at times the cultural adjustments in marriage or cooperative church work are greater between the two ethnic Anabaptist groups than they are with the Costa Ricans.

One key to the success of this effort has been a shared commitment to learn Spanish. This may seem like an obvious point, but traditionally the identity of both immigrant groups had been closely linked to their German dialects as one of the "boundary markers" that helped separate them as a gathered church from the "fallen world." Although some families may continue to speak English or German at home, Spanish is now clearly established as the public language: the language of school, church and business; and for most of the youth, Spanish is the language of choice.

Power and money: Despite these successes, the challenges of cross-cultural communication and equality of power persist. For example, even though the community has made a conscious effort at leadership training, Philip acknowledges that the number of Costa Ricans in positions of executive leadership is still disproportionately small. And he worries that some of the newer Costa Rican converts may be attracted to the church as much by stereotypical assumptions about North American power and money as by the gospel.

Dale Heisey, pastor of the Marsella congregation, expresses similar concerns. "We struggle with the question of when to baptize," he says. "The Great Commission calls us not only to preach the gospel but to teach new converts to 'observe all things.'" For groups like the Beachy Amish and the Kleine Gemeinde, questions of external practice and form take on new meaning in a cross-cultural context.

"We have tried to steer away from freezing our 'Ordnung' or discipline," says Philip, "yet we don't want to be casual about the changes we introduce." Thus, although plain dress is required of all members, the group no longer insists that men wear suspenders, and they soon discovered that black stockings for women were too impractical, given the ubiquitous mud during the rainy season. They also simplified the style of the prayer veiling so that Costa Rican women, who were not accustomed to sewing their clothes, could make their veilings with little trouble or expense.

Still, some traditional elements are unmistakable. At church on Sunday morning, plainly dressed worshipers seat themselves, separated by gender, in straight bench pews. The hymns may have been translated into Spanish, but they are still sung at a mournful pace to familiar gospel tunes in four-part harmony; and the Sunday school in the cement-floor basement—with its curtain dividers, chalkboards and flannel-graph easels—would be immediately familiar to anyone who grew up in a conservative Mennonite church in the United States.

"People look at us as conservative," Philip says. "And conservatism, of course, is supposedly a detriment to our outreach. Yet we feel it is actually a great advantage. People looking in from the outside see us as clearly different from the world."

Constant flux: At the same time, Philip acknowledges that the boundaries between the church and the world are constantly in flux. In no other area is this more evident than in economic issues like labor, wealth and materialism. While most members from a Beachy Amish or Kleine Gemeinde background are not rich, their cultural patterns of work discipline, family-based investment strategies and connections to overseas markets have tended to create significant differences in wealth and power between them and their Costa Rican brothers and sisters. (See sidebar, page 8.)

"For many years we struggled just to survive economically," says Philip. "We are now entering a phase when our congregations are feeling the pressures of materialism that the churches in the United States have long had to face." Philip compares financial resources with a medication he gives his cattle for parasites. Used for a definite purpose and in a limited dosage, the medication serves its purpose. But too much will kill the cattle. According to Philip, "The health of our church depends on active mutual disciplining in the congregation. Being a Christian is not a theory; it's a life."

The future of this cross-cultural Costa Rican Mennonite community—and its delicate amalgam of the gospel with ethnicity, language, traditions and customs—is uncertain. But if it continues to thrive, says Philip, "we will need to maintain a clarity about biblical principles applied in daily life without falling into a legalism that is culturally bound." Recalling the words of Albert Dueck, a much-loved Kleine Gemeinde leader who died in 1996, Philip says, "Albert always used to counsel us to be careful about systems. Building the church is following Christ. In every situation, Christ needs to be brought as a fresh breath of life."

John D. Roth teaches history at Goshen (Ind.) College. This article is adapted from one in Mennonite Life *(March 1998)*

One key to the success of this effort has been a shared commitment to learn Spanish.

Photo courtesy of John D Roth

"It is impossible to expect people to function at a church level if at marriage we draw the line and say no further."

—Philip Yoder

The other half o

Koinonia—sharing life with God, Christ and each other—is the essential mark of the church, both the local church and the church universal.

by Larry Miller

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity. ... For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.
—Psalm 133:1,4

Living together in unity" is a primary value for the body of Christ. This idea is reinforced in a variety of New Testament texts, the most renowned being Jesus' final prayer for his disciples: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one" (John 17:20). Here living together in unity is viewed by Jesus not only as blessing for the community but as a way for the community to be a blessing for the world.

Part of what makes the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church movement toward unity so important for the rest of the world family of faith is that throughout much of Mennonite history—as in many other streams of Protestantism—unity seems not to have been a primary value. We have sometimes viewed it as less important than faithfulness to Christ, perhaps forgetting that unity is Christ's will for us. We have sometimes thought it less necessary than mission, forgetting that the disciples' unity is, in John 17 at least, an instrument of Christ's mission.

Where there is no local koinonia, there is no local church. Where there is no international koinonia, there is no international church.

In spite of the fact that we identify ourselves as a peace church and emphasize mediation or conciliation, other churches have probably given more attention to the question of church unity, both theologically and structurally. Particularly during the second half of this century, in various places around the world, many churches have worked both on the theological question of what kind of church unity we should seek and the structural question of what shape church union can take.

During the past 30 years many theological dialogues have been held exploring similarities and differences between denominations or confessional families. The identity of the church has become the key question in many of these dialogues: What really makes the church the church? What should be at the heart of our attempts to revision the church, to be the church, to structure the church, to unite the church? Fellowship—or "communion" or "koinonia," as it is most often called in these conversations—has emerged as the central notion to describe the essence of the church and the unity worth seeking.

Across the church there appears to be growing agreement that koinonia—sharing life with God, Christ and each other—is the essential mark of the church, both the local church and the church universal. Where there is no local koinonia, there is no local church. Where there is no international koinonia, there is no international church.

Not 'warm and fuzzy': This koinonia across natural boundaries invests those who are prepared to take practical steps toward sharing life, such as the sharing of possessions, even to the point of privation. Koinonia means more than occasional encounters. Koinonia is not something "warm and fuzzy." It engages people in some kind of structured sharing of life—a sign of spiritual union and incarnated in durable relationships with one another.

In the New Testament, koinonia as "living together in unity" takes concrete shape in at least two kinds of relationships or structures. On the one hand are relationships of solidarity. The partners in koinonia gather together in one place. They eat together. They pray together. They share possessions. They worship together. They redistribute their economic resources according to needs. On the other hand are relationships of authority or accountability. For example, the apostles teach while others listen. And, as the story of Ananias and Sapphira shows, members are asked to give an account of their choices and their actions; in this particular case the accountability has to do with the practice of solidarity within the community.

Koinonia, God's gift and our calling, takes shape not only in the local church but also in the world church.

The apostle Paul's well-known fund-raising efforts for the church in Jerusalem suggest that Christian koinonia takes shape in relationships of financial solidarity beyond the local community to the international church. Writing to Galatian Christians (2:1-10), Paul recalls a meeting with James, Cephas and John 14 years earlier in Jerusalem. He says that these men had extended to him "the right hand of koinonia," thus confirming the unity of the church in mission to both Gentiles and Jews. The koinonia thus sealed, Paul continues, was bound up with the injunction "to remember the poor" in

koinonia

Jerusalem. The way Paul repeats and develops this point suggests that he regards financial solidarity as a concrete expression of koinonia between the church in Jerusalem and the Gentile churches in other parts of the world. For him the collection is more than a simple distribution of alms. The action of sharing material goods interethnically or internationally is implied in the logic of ecclesial fellowship. In this act of solidarity, the differences between ethnic, national or socioeconomic groups are transformed into love (agape).

The classical example of koinonia as shared life in translocal relationships of authority is the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). The function of that gathering was an authority function: to make decisions on a crucial faith and life issue, a fundamental mission issue. The source and scope of the authority was implicitly international: The whole international ecclesial community of the day was in some sense represented and the decisions made were to be applied in the life of the church universal.

For earliest Christianity, koinonia was to be international as well as national or ethnic or local.

Mutual accountability: "Fellowship" was of the ecclesiological essence for earliest Anabaptism. For the first Anabaptists, we have been taught, the church was "Gemeinde": a voluntary and exclusive fellowship of truly converted believers in Christ committed to both mutual solidarity and mutual accountability.

And you have not forgotten this. The two fundamental theological statements so far adopted by the emerging new denomination assume that koinonia is the essence of the church and the unity you seek. This is most clearly the case in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective (see in particular the articles on "The Church of Jesus Christ," "Discipline in the Church" and "Church Order and Unity") but also underlies the statement Vision: Healing and Hope.

But what happens when koinonia is used to evaluate the emerging vision, mission and structure of the new denomination? Building koinonia between your member churches is a primary value. What seems hardly yet in the picture is the other half of koinonia—solidarity with and accountability to the worldwide church.

I see and hear little reference to accountability to the worldwide church in integration documents and discussions. Some questions and initiatives from the side of the mission agencies may go furthest in this direction. But in the statement on polity, accountability seems to end where the denomination ends. There appears to be little call for koinonia, including accountability, beyond the borders of the new denomination.

Fifty-five percent of the worldwide family of faith lives in Africa, Asia and Latin America. One of the most important spiritual and structural questions the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement faces in the decades ahead is whether we will seize the God-given occasion to experience the other side of koinonia, solidarity and mutual accountability as a worldwide church.

The most critical element needed to deepen koinonia in the worldwide family of faith is the capacity of the North American church to realize its need of the worldwide church, its readiness to view the worldwide church as God's gift and its desire to work as hard at enabling international koinonia as you are now working on creating deeper fellowship between yourselves and your churches.

I'm concerned that those building the new structures of koinonia in North America will burn out. Will there be vision, commitment, energy, staff, time and money left to work on the other side of koinonia—koinonia with the other Anabaptist-Mennonite churches in North America and with the rising church in Africa, Asia and Latin America?

The world church needs a strong new "Mennonite Church" in Canada and the United States, not a burned-out one. In the Bible, after six days or six years comes a Sabbath day or a sabbatical year. After six years of labor, take a year off for rest and restoration, compliments of God and the worldwide church. Then, with the same vigor you are now pursuing integration, throw yourselves into the other side of koinonia, deeper solidarity with and more meaningful accountability to the global church.

For now, write into your vision statements, your six-year plans, your polity papers, your budgets and your hearts what your Confession of Faith already says: "The church exists as a community of believers in the local congregation, as a community of congregations, and as the worldwide community of faith."

You are already members of Mennonite World Conference and thus officially committed to "fellowship, communication and cooperation" with 81 other national or transnational churches in 49 countries. MWC is ready to help facilitate your koinonia with them and with the wider church universal.

The most critical element needed to deepen koinonia in the worldwide family of faith is the capacity of the North American church to realize its need of the worldwide church.

Larry Miller of Strasbourg, France, but currently living in Elkhart, Ind., is executive secretary of Mennonite World Conference. This article is adapted from a sermon he preached March 21 to a meeting of all boards and commissions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan.

Events

Central District Conference annual meeting, June 18-20, Bluffton, Ohio.

Pacific Southwest Conference annual meeting, June 26-27, Phoenix.

Workers

Dick, Daagya of McPherson, Kan., is starting a three-year Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in Guatemala where she will work in restorative justice.

Jantzi, Rhoda and Scott of Harrisonburg, Va., are starting three-year MCC assignments in Guatemala as country representatives.

Keim, David was licensed April 19 as associate pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Klingler, Leslie Hawthorne and Tim of San Luis Obispo, Calif., are starting three-year MCC assignments in Costa Rica working in agriculture and community development.

Roth, Kathleen and Kenneth of Morton, Ill., are starting three-year MCC assignments in Mexico as church relation workers.

Wengerd, Sara of Goshen, Ind., is starting a three-year MCC assignment in Northern Ireland as a bereavement counselor.

Births

Beck, Evan J., April 6, to Brent and Launa (Rohrer) Beck, Goshen, Ind.

Gerig, Taylor Grant, Jan. 9, to Karen (Wilson) and Nathan Gerig, Lebanon, Ore.

Keplinger, Bailey Douglas, Jan. 3, to Amy (Curry) and Jeff Keplinger, Criders, Va.

McGrew, Shane Fox, March 26, to Shawn and Whitney (Cope) McGrew, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller, Curtis Matthew, April 4, to Lisa (Conrad) and Matthew Miller, Manheim, Pa.

Miller, Dustin Dean, Jan. 10, to Pam (Hilyer) and Paul Miller, Woodburn, Ore.

Neuschwander, Hannah Ashleigh, Jan. 23, to Scott and Vanessa (Gambill) Neuschwander, Albany, Ore.

Shrock, Mikala Renee, Jan. 29, to Alvie and Sheila (Kropf) Shrock, Brownsville, Ore.

Simpson, Will Gertsen, Feb. 20, to Brian and Karen (Gertsen) Simpson, Wichita, Kan.

Yoder, Hannah Grace, March 25, to Grace (Kauffman) and Nathan Yoder, Lancaster, Pa.

Marriages

Donavan/Saltsman: Michael Donavan, Port Allegany, Pa., and Tamie Saltsman, Port Allegany, April 25, by Neil Binder.

Drabouski/Mellott: Colette Drabouski, Harleysville, Pa., and Bruce Mellott, Quakertown, Pa., April 4, by Steven Nyce.

Grieser/Niessen: Sarah Grieser, Albany, Ore., and Rudi Niessen, Paraguay, April 4, by John Willems.

Groff/Stoltzfus: Kimberly Groff, New Holland, Pa., and Craig Stoltzfus, Parkesburg, Pa., April 4, by Richard Buckwalter.

Koehn/Sutton: Sharon Koehn, Greensburg, Kan., and Bill Sutton, Greensburg, March 28, by Jeffrey Blackburn.

Lantz/Liller: Ronald Lantz Jr., Cumberland, Md., and Stephanie Liller, Keyser, W.Va., April 4, by Carlos Reyes and Sven Miller.

Pipkin/Sims: Joseph Pipkin, Houston, and Shannon Sims, Cleveland, April 3, by Robin Miller.

Deaths

Andres, Joanna Sudermann, 94, Hesston, Kan., died March 31. Survivors: children Amy Reed, James; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: April 6 at Newton, Kan., by Verney Unruh, Rusty Bonham and Mary Dyck.

Beiler, Elam B., 89, Gordonville, Pa., died March 18. Survivors: children Melvin, Melba King, Mildred, Joan Smoker, Marcia Yoder; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 21 at Atglen, Pa., by Ray Lapp and Herman Glick.

Bishop, Catherine Detweiler, 85, Souderton, Pa., died March 28 of congestive heart, respiratory and renal failure. Survivors: husband, Claude; stepchildren Marilyn Godshall, LaMar, Bruce; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: April 1 at Blooming Glen, Pa., by Truman Brunk, David Stevens and Benjamin Stutzman.

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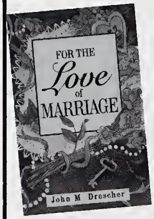

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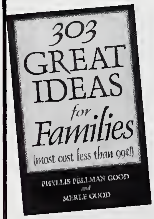

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Ebersole, Sara Rose, infant, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 28. Survivors: parents, Lee and Connie Ebersole. Burial: April 1 at Harrisonburg by John Kiblinger and Marian Buckwalter.

Garber, Christina Miller, 92, Hesston, Kans., died March 21. Survivors: children Rebecca Petersheim, Duane, Willa Nafziger, Frances Ewy, Roma Schmidt, Christina Bachman; 23 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Burial: March 27 at Hesston by Wesley Jantz, Ann Showalter and Ritch Hochstetler.

Greenawalt, Dana G., 89, Goshen, Ind. Survivors: children Carol Bushong, Ted; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: March 16 at Topeka, Ind., by Lloyd R. Miller.

Grove, Fannie R., 92, Elizabethtown, Pa., died March 29. Survivors: daughter, Marian Wenger; four grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Burial: March 31 at Elizabethtown by Fred Garber and Martin Nolt.

Jantz, Frank, 89, Wichita, Kan., died March 23. Survivors: children Ronald, James, Gary; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: March 26 at Hillsboro, Kan., by Donald Steelberg.

Kniss, Edna "Elizabeth," 93, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 25. Survivors: children Paul, Mark, David, Esther Augsburger; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 28 at Harrisonburg by Myron Augsburger, Richard Early, Phil Kniss, Daniel Smucker and John Kiblinger.

Kropf, Milo, 65, Sterling, Ill., died March 25. Survivors: wife, Betty; children Sally Landis, Jeanette Boettner, Sandra Lund, Ann Kurtz, Rita Miller, Dale, Merlin, Noland; 22 grandchildren. Burial: March 28 at Sterling by Marlin Thomas.

Masingila, Daniel Mambo, 5, Woodburn, Ore., died March 8 of a massive seizure. Survivors: parents, Stephen and Mary Masingila. Burial: March 12 at Hubbard, Ore., by Jon Yoder and Lynn Olson.

Miller, Lawrence, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died March 26. Survivors: children Gary, Carolyn Walter; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: March 30 at Kalona by Scott Swartzendruber and Mick Murray.

Moshier, Veronica "Fannie" Gingerich, 93, Lititz, Pa., died March 6 of congestive heart failure. Survivors: children Elton, Arnold, Edwin; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: March 9 at Bart, Pa., by Don Good, Bonnie Stutzman and Marlin Nafziger.

Sawatzky, Edna Funk, 86, Wichita, Kan., died April 6. Survivors: daughter, Gaila Marten; two grandchildren. Burial: April 10 at Wichita by Donald Steelberg.

Showalter, Richard L., 78, Chino Valley, Ariz., died March 14. Survivors: wife, Genevieve; children Nancy Redding, Rebecca Hynds, Miriam Phillips, Lois Sperry, Ruth Robinson, Benjamin, David; 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: March 18 at Chino Valley by Len Redding.

Steury, Lewis, 70, Spencerville, Ind., died March 29. Survivors: wife, Malinda; children Pauline Zook, Melvin, Ed, Leon, Linda Ruckman, Diane Smith; 16 grandchildren. Burial: April 1 at Grabill, Ind., by Douglas Zehr and Don Delagrange.

Stutzman, Ethel Marie Rediger, 83, Albany, Ore., died Feb. 17 of cancer. Survivors: children Elden, William, Ivan, Duane, Les; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; Burial: Feb. 20 at Albany by Al Burkey.

Swope, Sem W., 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 28. Survivors: wife, Ruby; children Galen, Nelson, Edwin, John, Twila Showalter, Erma Blosser, Belinda Oplander; 18 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 31 at Harrisonburg by Joe Shenk, Edith Shenk and Dan Longenecker.

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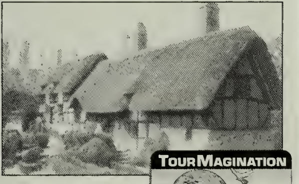

Classifieds

Western Mennonite School openings, beginning Aug. 24, 1998.

Middle school instructor: provide leadership and head teaching responsibilities for combined grades 7-8. Subject areas to include language arts, social studies, Bible, health, exploratories and general math.

Assistant principal: part-time position to be combined with teaching or other responsibilities for full-time. Duties include providing leadership for student life, daily discipline, oversight of dormitories.

Librarian: part-time position to provide leadership and supervision to library and resource center; certification desired. Computer technology skills preferred; may be combined with other part-time duties for full-time.

Tutors: part-time or full-time positions available; teacher certification desired.

Extracurricular positions: ***girls volleyball*** (head varsity coach; JV coach needed as well), ***drama director*** (for fall drama production)

Contact Eric Martin, Western Mennonite School, 9045 Wallace Rd. NW, Salem, OR 97304; 503-363-2000.

Terry, Montana, CPS reunion, Sept. 23-24 at Howard Johnson Lodge, Exit 5, Ohio Turnpike, Toledo, Ohio. Contact Royce Engle, 205 Maplewood Drive, Pandora, OH 45877; 419-384-7315.

Manheim Christian Day School: Teachers needed in the following areas: ***1st grade, science/math, language arts, art.*** Send resumes to Crist Peachey, principal, Manheim Christian Day School, 686 Lebanon Road, Manheim, PA 17545; 717-665-4300. MCDS is a member of the Lancaster Area Council of Mennonite Schools.

Mennonite Mutual Aid is seeking a ***fraternal adviser*** for the Lancaster, Pa., area and surrounding region to serve as a resource person and communication link with congregations, assisting them in accessing MMA services and programs. Qualified candidates will have the ability to motivate others, good communication, public speaking, organizational and management skills, an understanding of local church structures, and a willingness to travel.

If interested, please fax letter of interest with resume to Human Resources Dept., 219-533-5264 or mail to MMA, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.

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Dock Woods Community, a growing CCRC near Lansdale, Pa., Montgomery County, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***manager—human resources.*** This position plans, organizes and manages the human resource department for our community. A bachelor's degree in human resource management or related field is required. Experience in the long-term care field is a plus.

Send resume and salary requirements to: Edward D. Brubaker, executive director, Dock Woods Community, 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446.

Goshen College seeks the following positions:

Physical education: starting July 1998, a full-time tenure-track faculty member. Responsibilities include teaching physical education courses, particularly exercise physiology, kinesiology, senior research seminar and skills courses; coaching one or two sports: men's tennis and golf. Administrative work in exercise science, sports information or as athletic director are also possibilities. Qualifications: master's degree required, doctorate strongly preferred; successful experience in teaching and coaching.

Athletic trainer: starting August 1998, a part-time certified athletic trainer. Additional possibilities include teaching related courses and administrative work as listed above. Qualifications: master's degree required with certification by the NATA, doctorate preferred; successful experience in athletic training.

Reference-instruction librarian: part-time position from August to May. Responsibilities include normal reference work and teaching library research skills in classes. Qualifications: M.L.S. (ALA accredited), reference and teaching experience. Computer searching skills would be helpful.

Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Send letter of application, resume and three letters of reference to Paul Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email: dean@goshen.edu.

We encourage applications through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the positions are filled.

Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare, provider of behavioral health services affiliated with Lancaster Mennonite Conference, is seeking candidates for top ***human resources*** position. Master's degree in HR or related field and three years experience in human resource leadership role, preferably within health care.

Send letter and resume, including salary history, to Human Resources, P.O. Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064; fax 717-270-2455.

Little Eden Camp, Onekama, Mich., member of Mennonite Camping Association, seeks full-time positions in ***food service*** and voluntary service as ***generalists.*** Positions available August.

For more information, call 616-889-4294 or email LittleEden@juno.com.

Crossroads Gift and Thrift, a Ten Thousand Villages partnership store in LaJunta, Colo., seeks a half-time ***store manager,*** beginning Sept. 1, 1998. Retail management experience preferred.

If interested, contact present manager at 719-853-6643, or board chair at 719-384-7304.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks headquarters-based ***overseas leadership.*** Program leadership, visionary and team skills required. Overseas experience preferred.

Send resume by July 15 to Lamar Myers, P.O. Box 628, Salunga, PA 17538; email lamarm@emm.org.

Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, Lancaster, Pa., area, seeks ***executive director*** to begin July 1998. Experience in nonprofit administration, fund-raising and mediation desired.

Address inquiries and/or resume to Greg Armstrong, 40 Sherman St., Lancaster, PA 17602; 717-291-6537.

International Guest House, Washington, D.C.: One-year ***voluntary service*** positions open at the International Guest House, a bed and breakfast sponsored by the Allegheny Conference. Needed: one couple in September, one single at the end of May, one single at the end of August. Call 202-726-5808.

West Fallowfield Christian School has teaching positions: ***1st grade*** and ***K-8 physical education,*** beginning August 1998. To apply, contact Gary G. Sensenig, principal, West Fallowfield Christian School, 795 Fallowfield Rd., Atglen, PA 19310; 610-593-5011; fax 610-593-6041; email gargsen@aol.com.

Classified advertising space is available in *The Mennonite* to congregations, conferences and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, with a minimum of $25. To place a classified advertisement, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller. Deadline is three weeks prior to date of issue.

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Farewell to America

by Larry Cornies

Shortly before I boarded my flight March 19 in Toronto to attend the meetings of boards and commissions of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan., I handed an envelope to a U.S. immigration official.

He opened it, gave me a puzzled look, then ushered me into a brightly lit back room. There I surrendered the "green card" that had been locked up inside a bank's safe-deposit box since I returned to Canada 13 years ago following a five-year stint on GC staff in Newton, Kan. These cards allow citizens of other countries to live and work in the United States.

Immigration agents wanted the card back, given my long absence from the United States and my residence in Canada; I could think of no reason to keep it. Thus a 15-minute formality in the bowels of Pearson International Airport erased the final official link to my American experience. Something similar is happening within the church. The acceptance of a one-denomination, two-country structure for the new Mennonite Church will mean a fundamental, tectonic shift in the way churches on opposite sides of the Canada-U.S. border relate to each other. National identities will become primary; the binational bond secondary.

I felt unease—nearly a sense of panic. When I finally sorted out the emotional swirl, I realized my anxiety stemmed from the fact that much of my spiritual formation and change over the past two decades has been the result of my exposure and sensitization to American issues and struggles, which have served as correctives and points of illumination in my spiritual journey as a Canadian. Racism. Militarism. Nationalism. The Christian life in tension with the state. The seductive nature of power and authority. The courage of conviction in the face of an incredible cascade of public pressure to conform. The effective integration of a wide variety of cultures into both membership rolls and roles of leadership and influence. I've learned about these from my American brothers and sisters in a way that would have been impossible in the same way in Canada or within a strictly Canadian church structure.

Here are some thank-you notes to American Mennonites, congregations and their conferences for the ways they've helped me grow:

- The courage of Chuck Epp and Kendal Warkentine, who, in their early adulthood, challenged the most powerful government in the world, the Selective Service, the FBI and the weight of public opinion by refusing to register for the U.S. military draft for reasons of faith and conscience. Nearly as inspiring, when the trials occurred in federal courts in Wichita, Kan., was the presence of dozens of supporters from Mennonite congregations, there to offer support in their witness against the state.
- The prophetic witness of GC employees Cornelia Lehn, a Canadian, and Robert Hull, an American Mennonite by choice, not ethnicity, in asking that they be allowed to withhold from the government that part of their taxes used for military purposes. These conference workers sparked debate over a Christian's duty to the state, a special conference session on the question and increased awareness of efforts, on both sides of the border, to create peace tax funds for such conscientious objectors.

In the new Mennonite Church, how will Christians on both sides of the 49th parallel learn from each other, critique each other's faithfulness and provide corrective lenses to each other's prophetic witness, blindness or bias?

- Those who forced me to confront the specter of nuclear annihilation, which knows no borders, through protests at U.S. weapons plants such as the one at Rocky Flats, Colo. It's still far too easy for Canadians to think of the global arms trade as a U.S. problem.
- The grace of congregations that felt uneasy about these types of witness yet remained committed to the conference, in loving dialogue, despite their disagreement. For them, other forms of evangelism were closer to the heart of the gospel. Yet they stayed in meaningful debate with their brothers and sisters.
- The Damascus Road project and how it has pushed to the fore racism's subtle forms. Only recently have many Canadians seen racism as a disease that also has long infected our society. We're finally outgrowing our denial of it as something that might exist in a society as tolerant and immigrant-friendly as Canada.

In the new Mennonite Church, how will Christians on both sides of the 49th parallel learn from each other, critique each other's faithfulness and provide corrective lenses to see points of dialogue in each other's prophetic witness, blindness or bias? Those are questions to consider as we forfeit our binational "green cards" and adopt more nationally oriented structures—structures more reminiscent of a multinational corporation than a kingdom in which political boundaries are irrelevant.

Larry Cornies, London, Ont., is a board member of the GC Division of General Services and of the Interim Periodical Board, which oversees The Mennonite

The final shape of our church structures, as we move closer to integration, will be debated and refined in coming months by those with much greater ability to discern them than me. Separate Canadian and U.S. conferences, as primary points of identity for congregations of the new Mennonite Church, may work well. They may even be preferable. That general direction, however, is now all but certain.

—Larry Cornies

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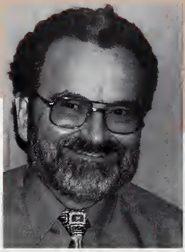

J. Lorne Peachey

What it could mean to be integrated

When I accepted the assignment to become editor of this new, integrated publication, I joined what is still a very small group of people: those who have been asked to work for an integrated Mennonite Church—even before that new denomination exists. As such, I knew some things would change for me. A part of the Mennonite Church (MC) all my life, I would now also need to edit for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), and it couldn't be communication as usual. What I wasn't prepared for, however, were the deep changes that have taken place inside me in the process.

I'll not soon forget the first time I realized something was happening in my psyche. It was last July, in Winnipeg, during a special GC delegate session. One evening as we sang a hymn, the title of which I've long since forgotten, it dawned on me: "These *too* are my people; these are my sisters and brothers." I had to stop singing because of the overwhelming realization that my primary church family, my denomination—up until then numbering close to 100,000—had just grown by another 60,000.

I've also discovered since that evening that I'm no longer able to think GC or MC. That means, for one thing, that I have no interest in making comparisons about which group does what or who's more of this and less of that. Questions about the differences between GCs and MCs have almost become offensive, as though a part of me is being attacked.

Bring together a group of people who wants to work at creating something new and the results will be more than the sum of the ideas of those individuals.

I must also admit to some—no, a great deal—of impatience with the sometimes slow integration process. More than once I've found myself sitting through a meeting biting my tongue. This is especially true in those how-much-the-MCs-will-lose or how-much-the-GCs-should-retain discussions. "What does it matter?" I want to say. "We'll soon all be one anyway. Get on with it!"

I don't say that because I remember that bringing together two strong, healthy traditions takes time—and energy, lots of energy. It happens in a marriage (which seems to be the favorite analogy of integration these days). It took time to merge *Gospel Herald* with the former *The Mennonite* to make this new publication (though six months didn't seem like enough time in the middle of the process). And it will take time to bring together our two denominations.

But the need for time must not blind us to the excitement and possibilities of the future. Already in the few months I've been working at this, I've made so many new friends, have been given so many creative ideas and have found so many new ways of doing things that I'd never want to go back to what once was.

Bring together a group of people who wants to work at creating something new and the results will be more than the sum of the ideas of those individuals. Something happens in the process so that the outcome is often bigger and better than any of the individuals involved could have dreamed.

Reports I hear from the integrated area conferences tell me this is true. I also learned it as the seven of us staff members who work on this publication brought together the first issues. I see hints of it in the work of the Integration Committee and, more recently, of the joint meetings of the GC and MC general boards. The new, integrated Mennonite Church can be different—and better—than any of us imagines at this point.

That's why I find the argument that integration won't really change all that much to be short-sighted and wrong. It's an argument I've heard used a lot, however, during integration discussions to calm fears and anxieties of congregations and individuals who are not sure they want to be part of the process.

We will change in integration. That's what, I believe, the Spirit intended when both GC and MC delegates voted for merger in Wichita, Kan., in 1995. That vote was for new possibilities, for a church much different and better than we now dream.

Will that really happen in integration? That depends. We can go into the coming merger focusing on our losses and on the difficulties of bringing together our traditions. Or we can anticipate the new, the changed and the improved that the Spirit can bring to this small part of God's kingdom in North America called Mennonite.

The difference is our choice.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

May 12, 1998

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How one man used music to help bring reconciliation

4 Chinese church gets Taiwanese help

5 Hymnologist Mary Oyer honored

8 The life of reconciler Tom Fitch

16 'Too chicken to climb the hill?'

T*he Mennonite* welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Alternative to polarization

The article "A Search for Faithfulness" (*The Mennonite,* April 28), addressing the difficult issue of congregational discipline, is the first clear alternative in print, to my knowledge, to the polarization of excommunicate or don't excommunicate. I want to commend the authors for their valiant effort at drawing our attention to the issue in a different way and encouraging us to dialogue about deeply rooted issues from a different perspective.

One biblical strand we must not forget is that there was no such thing as conferences in biblical times. All who confessed belief in Christ were immediately baptized into the faith and were accepted as part of the Christian family. There was excommunication from a local fellowship by a trusted person of great respect and honor (Paul in 1 Corinthians) but nothing more (or less). Not even at the Council of Nicea, if my memory serves me correctly, were heretical churches banned from the fellowship of churches. At the same time, aberrant leaders were severely denounced, as the article pointed out, and those who followed them likewise. It was healthy dialogue and debate, the kind of dialogue we Mennonites tend to shy away from. —*Marlin E. Thomas, Sterling, Ill.*

Don't evaluate by caricature

Steve Ratzlaff obviously deserves respect for his thoughts on church growth in a Mennonite setting (*The Mennonite,* April 7). His recognition of the necessity of a strong sense of vision and identity is right on target. I believe, however, he has fallen into a pattern I have observed in numerous expressions of Mennonites about the methods of others.

As a seminary intern with a large Baptist church in Denver, I was privileged to participate in a learning tour of growing churches in Southern California. We visited with Norm Wahn, the primary initiator of telemarketing church planting. I was quite skeptical of this approach, but I have no doubt that this method of evangelism and church development has effectively advanced God's kingdom in those fellowships.

Is this method ever appropriate for Mennonites? Steve seems to feel that it necessitates a church without a sense of community, something he seems to identify as particularly unique to Mennonites. In this assertion, he has fallen into the common practice of evaluating only by a caricature of others. A caricature emphasizes some perceived characteristic of another to the degree of distortion. To identify the approach used by Norm Wahn as incompatible with community is to respond to a mere caricature. I know this because I sat with Norm Wahn and examined the assumptions of this method.

I am not dramatically concerned if Mennonite groups use this approach or not. But responding to caricatures blocks learning from others some things that might aid us in reaching out. And I sometimes question if Mennonites are not revealing a tendency toward seeing themselves a little too highly in comparison with others. Thorough understanding of others generally elevates them in our eyes and decreases any tendency toward self-important notions. We should not adopt wholesale the methods of others. Neither should we respond with aversion to mere caricatures of God's work in other groups.—*George O'Reilly, Mountain Lake, Minn.*

Lack of information

The data in the deaths section of For the Record is incomplete and a waste of space if some information is left out. If the parents' names were included, we older people could more easily identify the deceased.—*Jacob H. Musser, New Holland, Pa.*

Maybe I'm beginning to show my age, but the first two things I read in *The Mennonite* are Readers Say and the obituaries in For the Record. For the Record helps me maintain some sense of connectedness with friends, family and acquaintances. How else would I have found out that a former voluntary service unit member had died? In fact, I wish there was a little more information included in the death notices.—*Joyce Yoder, Glenwood Springs, Colo.*

Sin and covenant

A letter in the April 14 issue of *The Mennonite* asked: If you were a man, would you want to be in bed with another man when God returns? In this same context, would we want to be found living in the United States, a country that is directly responsible for the deaths of more than 1 million innocent Iraqi people as a result of sanctions? Or would we want to be watching TV in our plush, four-bedroom houses in middle-class America while there are millions of people in this country who have nothing? Or would we want to be at the mall buying for all our wants when there are billions of people worldwide who don't have money for their needs? Let us first look into our own sinful lifestyle before we condemn other people for theirs.—*Andy Peifer, Harrisonburg, Va.*

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feature

8 **Ebony & ivory: the life of reconciler Tom Fitch**
This man's dedication to racial reconciliation was as contagious as his love for music. And he lived it wholeheartedly.

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

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say readers say

As I have read the letters concerning homosexuality, there are two things that bother me. First, there seems to be a flippant, disingenuous and casual use of theological language to legitimize things. I am referring to the use of the word "covenant." One of the elements of the biblical use of this word is the acknowledgment of a sovereign to impose sanctions, positive and negative. When homosexual relationships are referred to as covenant relationships, which sovereign is being acknowledged? Not the state, which God gave a monopoly on earthly negative sanctions. Not the church, which provides positive sanctions. Neither of these God-ordained institutions acknowledges the legitimacy of these types of relationships. The secular humanist idea that man, not God, is the standard has become supreme. We are the sovereign implied with the use of the word "covenant."

Second, why are there never any references to biblically ordained relationships? It seems pretty clear, using biblical definitions, as to which are and which are not ordained of God. A common argument is, "But the Bible doesn't address [put in your favorite controversial issue]." Maybe this would open the important issue of how we view God's Word. Does silence in the New Testament affirm or negate the Old Testament? How we view silence in the New Testament will cause us to come to very different conclusions.—*Royce Buller, Goshen, Ind.*

Many people think the curse on sexual perversion does not apply when people with homosexual desires act them out in "covenanted" relationships. But men will be men and women will be women, whatever their sexual practices. Men's sexuality is often shallow and fickle, and anyone who thinks that male homosexuals are monogamous is a fool.—*Monty Ledford, Aberdeen, Idaho*

Poverty and AIDS a deadly combination

Food, rent as important as medicine, MCC worker says

MIAMI—They look to Isabelle Hill for food, housing, information and hope. For many of the 75 people with HIV or AIDS on Hill's caseload, "poverty, not AIDS, is their main challenge," she says.

Hill, a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer, is a case worker at Health Crisis Network in Miami, one of the largest health-care providers in Dade County for people living with HIV or AIDS. Many clients are unemployed and without stable housing. "The poor are struggling day to day to make ends meet, and sometimes taking medication and keeping doctor appointments are the least of their problems," says Hill, from Guelph, Ont.

This is especially true for African-American women, the population with the fastest-growing number of new AIDS cases. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases reports HIV infection as the leading cause of death in African-American women ages 25 to 44.

"Women, and particularly poor women, put their own needs last," Hill says. "First they attend to their families and then to themselves. If you imagine yourself having to take up to 30 pills a day, some with food and some without, at evenly spaced intervals while caring for several children, you can imagine some of the problems."

When clients first come to Hill, she assesses their needs and then refers them to doctors and other services that offer assistance with medication, housing and food. Hill also draws on her nursing background to counsel them on proper health maintenance, good nutrition and preventing additional infections such as tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases.

Hill occasionally makes a home visit or initiates contact with clients if she has not heard from them in a while. In one follow-up visit, Hill found her client's electricity had been cut off and she was in danger of losing her apartment.

In addition to counseling, Hill wades through the bureaucratic labyrinth to identify available assistance, from free bus passes for meeting doctor appointments to food vouchers and financial help for rent and utility bills. For people who are poor, these services are as essential as medicine in the fight against AIDS.—*Delphine Martin of MCC News Service*

Sometimes taking medication and keeping doctor appointments are the least of their problems.

—Isabelle Hill

Taiwanese pastor returns to China to offer help to growing church

NEWTON, Kan.—As the church in China continues to grow, the need for biblical and leadership training grows with it, and one Mennonite pastor in the Pacific Rim region recently stepped in to help.

Paulus Pan from the Fu An church in Hualien, Taiwan, spent March 7-16 teaching and preaching in Daming County, in the eastern Chinese province of Henan. The church in Daming was begun by General Conference Mennonite Church missionaries in the early 1900s.

The church in this area of China is growing very quickly. Daming County has some 7,000 Christians but no ordained pastors, only two ordained elders and only one young person who has had a year of training at a Bible institute. While most believers do have Bibles, other religious materials are few and of poor quality.

Pan first went to Daming last fall as part of a group of Mennonite mission agency representatives from North America, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Touched by the needs he saw there, he returned to Daming this year with the support of the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan. Other Mennonites in Taiwan have given study Bibles to the many house church leaders in Daming.

Pan reports finding "sincere Christian faith" in Daming. Some believers wake before sunrise and pray for one to two hours before beginning their long day's work of farming, he says.

Because many Christians believe Jesus will return soon, there is much emphasis on evangelism but little on discipleship training. A 40-day training session held every winter offers some basic instruction, but more is needed.

In addition to teaching from several books of the Bible, Pan spent time with church leaders. He found that while they are committed and zealous, there is also tension among them. He encouraged them to overcome their differences and unite for the good of the many who are coming to faith.—*Myrrl Byler for GCMC News Service*

The first Mennonite workers from North America to China went in the 1890s but with non-Mennonite organizations. Krimmer Mennonite Brethren missionary H.C. Bartel went shortly after the turn of the century, starting the first Mennonite fellowship in China. The General Conference Mennonite Church entered the country in 1909, the Mennonite Brethren in 1911 and the Mennonite Church in 1948. Most workers left China by 1951, shortly after the establishment of the communist government.

Singing celebrations: hymns, her and all of them

AMBS festival honors longtime hymnologist

ELKHART, Ind.—When Mary K. Oyer started teaching 50 years ago, she probably didn't consider herself a revolutionary. But that's how Goshen (Ind.) College president Shirley Showalter sees her.

At an April 25 banquet honoring Oyer's contributions to Mennonite hymnody and her half-century of teaching, Showalter credited Oyer with ushering in two revolutions. The first was her emphasis on the fine arts when she started teaching music at Goshen in 1945. The second was Oyer's gift of bringing the sacred music of many cultures into the Mennonite church. "Mary has shown us unabashed joy," Showalter said at the banquet, held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS).

Oyer taught at Goshen until 1987 and two years later resumed her teaching career at AMBS. She will retire this summer.

But Oyer's contributions go beyond academia. She was a member and then executive secretary of the committee working on *The Mennonite Hymnal,* published in 1969. She later was an editor for *Hymnal Sampler,* forerunner to the current *Hymnal: A Worship Book.*

Oyer

"Something happens to people when they sing," Oyer said. "They are transformed for a moment when they sing."

Oyer was further honored during an April 24-26 hymn festival hosted by AMBS. More than 200 voices from as far as Alberta and Oregon turned out to sing selections from *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and *The Mennonite Hymnal.* Each hour of the festival focused on a different style of hymns.

The festival also featured "Sing to the Lord with Vibrant Voice," a hymn written in Oyer's honor by Janeen Bertsche Johnson and Bradley P. Lehman.

"It's wonderful to experience the influence Mary has had on all these people," said Ken Nafziger, music professor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. "We see here an appreciation for the breadth of hymns, a breadth that spans history and culture."

Oyer has devoted much of her interest to African hymnody, noting the authenticity of expression by African-American gospel songs as well as by German chorales.—*Susan E. Janzen and Mary E. Klassen*

Lyle Miller

Hymnal-a-thon organizers Todd Hershberger (left) and Ross Kauffman are joined by other Goshen College students in singing all 658 songs in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* April 26-29.

All hymnal entries get their chance

GOSHEN, Ind.—The first pitch was thrown out April 26 at 9 a.m. This, however, wasn't the start of a church-league softball game but another favorite pastime: hymn singing.

During a four-day Hymnal-a-thon, Goshen College freshmen Todd Hershberger and Ross Kauffman—with plenty of help from other members of the campus community—sang every verse of all 658 songs in *Hymnal: A Worship Book.* People gathered April 26-29 to sing from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., with hour breaks for lunch and dinner. The marathon ended April 29 at about 3 p.m. Some 120 guests took part in at least one song, including about 30 people who joined for the Hymnal-a-thon's conclusion: a reprise of "Wonderful Grace of Jesus" and—what else?—"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

Hershberger, a music major from Union City, Pa., and Kauffman, a Bible and religion major from Toledo, Ohio, organized the Hymnal-a-thon because of their love of singing. "In the book, there are hymns we sing and hymns we don't even take the time to learn," Hershberger says. "Many hymns we don't regularly sing deserve the chance to be sung."

Hershberger and Kauffman hope the Hymnal-a-thon becomes an annual occurrence.

Goshen music professor Doyle Preheim praises the event. "It's a historic moment," he says. "I'm not sure it's ever happened before. They had to take the songs at a pretty fast tempo to get through the entire book."

A special guest was Mary K. Oyer, Goshen professor emerita of music, who served as guest conductor for part of the singing. The Hymnal-a-thon was coincidentally scheduled for the same weekend Oyer was honored for her 50 years of teaching.—*Amy Gingerich*

> **In the book, there are hymns we sing and hymns we don't even take the time to learn.**
>
> —*Todd Hershberger*

Colombian gives elderly 'living hope'

I learned compassion for this neglected sector of the population.

—Maria Del Rosario de Melo

RIOHACHA, Colombia—Maria Del Rosario de Melo had a vision to care for the needs of the elderly. The result has not only been the creation of a daycare center for senior citizens but also the founding of a new Mennonite congregation.

A large portion of the elderly population in Colombia is without resources or livelihood. So in 1990, Melo incorporated Living Hope Home for the Elderly in Riohacha in northern Colombia. Located on 20 acres, the center offers literacy education, physical therapy, recreation, spiritual support, health care and more. Living Hope is even creating small businesses for its participants to generate income.

"[Senior citizens] often feel weighed down by the stress of old age and sink into loneliness and depression, feeling abandoned by the community, the state, their families and friends," Melo says. "The center has therefore developed programs for the emotional and spiritual well-being of senior citizens."

While she was able to start Living Hope with funding from business and government, Melo wanted church support. She had been a member of Berna Mennonite Church in Bogota, which operated its own home for the elderly.

"I learned compassion for this neglected sector of the population," Melo says. "When I moved to Riohacha, I felt God calling me to begin working for the elderly. But the churches in this city don't understand this kind of work as a Christian responsibility. I needed the support of my church."

Church people visited but felt Riohacha, 250 miles north of Bogota, was too far away. They, however, did enourage Melo to start a Mennonite congregation in the city. She has, and several members are on Living Hope's board.

Today the center serves 400 people, including 250 indigenous people. Mennonites in Colombia and North America continue to support its work. Eugene and Gladys Sprunger from Berne, Ind., spent two weeks in February painting at Living Hope.—*Aimee Moiso for GCMC News Service with Rich Preheim*

Correction: Mennonite Disaster Service is responding to storm damage in Gainesville, Ga. The location was misidentified as Gainesville, Fla., in the April 28 *The Mennonite*.

Spanish exploring West Africa connections

COTONOU, Benin—Following a recent visit to Benin and the Ivory Coast, a Spanish Mennonite congregation is exploring ways to develop partnerships in West Africa.

"Our church is ready for some kind of involvement with them and the needs of the people there," says Jose Gallardo, who, along with his wife, Carmen, and two other members of Burgos Evangelical Mennonite Fellowship, traveled in Benin and Ivory Coast in late February and early March.

The congregation is now considering several possibilities in West Africa: creating a home for abandoned children in Cotonou; sending a team of people to live in intentional community, supporting themselves with a business that would generate income for ministry; and helping plant additional Mennonite congregations in the region.

During the trip, Gallardo taught a week-long class on the Gospels at a Bible seminar in Cotonou and interacted with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers Linda and Rodney Hollinger-Janzen and Dorothy and Steve Wiebe-Johnson.

"They are a good example of faithful servants, humbly and fully identified with the people there," says Gallardo, who has worked with MBM in Spain. "We learned a lot from them, and they inspired us in the intense week of teaching."

Carmen Gallardo and Alvaro Gutierrez, a dentist, spent three days working at a clinic, where more than 30 African denominations have a long-term health ministry.

The Burgos contingent also traveled to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where they built relationships with Raymond Eba, founder of the Protestant Anabaptist Church of Ivory Coast.

Burgos Mennonite Fellowship has long discussed ways to expand its vision for mission, and recent conversations have included MBM president Stanley W. Green.

"He made us think about a project that would involve people from other cultures and nations ... which would express the unity and diversity of the body of Christ in solidarity with the poor of less-developed countries," Jose Gallardo says. "We hoped that Africans would also participate and be involved in very active ways."—*MBM News Service*

After 50 years, MCC work in Indonesia called 'farsighted' witness venture

SEMERANG, Indonesia—Mennonite Central Committee came to Indonesia for one purpose. The World War II occupation by the Japanese had left many Indonesians poor and without adequate food and clothing. There was "no question about the great need for relief in Java," wrote longtime MCC administrator Orie O. Miller in 1947 when he visited the country.

Indonesia was one of MCC's first forays outside North America and Europe. Now, half a century later, work on this island-chain nation has broadened to include agriculture, health, education and exchange programs.

Some 400 past and present Indonesia workers, members of the three Indonesia synods and numerous other celebrants gathered April 13 to reflect on MCC's 50 years of ministry in Indonesia.

Some Javanese pastors have urged the agency to take a more evangelical approach. But Mesach Krisetya, Mennonite World Conference president and moderator of the GKMI synod, said MCC's way of witness through community development was "farsighted."

Simply having the three Indonesian Mennonite synods cooperating was a triumph. Relations among the GITJ, GKMI and JKI synods have been strained. But a committee of more than a dozen people representing the three successfully pulled off the celebration.

MCC photo by Peter Kraybill

Mennonite Central Committee Indonesia workers and alumni and Indonesian Mennonites listen to Marthe Ropp relate memories of her 18 years with MCC in Indonesia. Ropp, from France, joined MCC after she saw the agency's work in Europe after World War II.

"When we talk about doctrine, we cannot be together," said one planning committee member. But in efforts such as the celebration, "we serve the Lord … and we work together."

Lawrence and Shirlee Yoder, who served with MCC in Indonesia from 1970 to 1980, will return this summer to help broaden dialogue among the churches.

The Indonesia program is MCC's largest with 19 North American workers and an annual budget of $263,000.—*Peter Kraybill for MCC News Service*

Guatemala Mennonites react to bishop's murder

GUATEMALA CITY—The brutal April 26 killing of a leading Roman Catholic bishop has left Mennonites in Guatemala stunned, sobered and fearing for the future of the peace process started in December 1996, ending the country's 36-year civil war.

Jose Juan Gerardi, who headed the Guatemalan Catholic Church's report on human rights violations, was stoned to death by an unknown assailant two days after releasing a report alleging that the Guatemalan army committed widespread abuses during the civil war.

"We ask that you pray for our national situation. We hope for solidarity from First World countries who thought that peace would be reached with the signatures on the peace accord," says Hector Argueta, a staff member of SEMILLA, the Central American Anabaptist seminary based in Guatemala.

Elaine Zook Barge, Mennonite Central Committee's Guatemala co-country representative, calls Gerardi a peacemaker. "He was well respected for his work for reconciliation and peace in the country," she says. "The killing is a clear message from the assassins to the church and Guatemala that certain people don't want the truth about human rights violations during the war to come out."

Barge and her husband, Nathan, joined thousands in Guatemala City on an April 28 silent walk in homage to the bishop and to remember his message of national reconciliation.

A letter from Menopaz, a Guatemalan Mennonite peace and justice organization, says, "It is paradoxical that assassins wanted to erase the countenance of one peacemaker because they were annoyed by the face that reflected God's justice and forgiveness."—*John Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

MBCM youth minister named Goshen dean

GOSHEN, Ind.—Carlos Romero, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries' minister of youth since 1990, has been named the new vice president for student life and dean of students at Goshen College, starting Aug. 1, 1999. He will remain in his MBCM post through the General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church convention in St. Louis in July 1999, giving leadership to the youth convention. Phyllis Carter, Goshen's interim vice president for student life and dean of students, will continue in that position through the end of the 1998-99 school year.

Ebony& ivory

The life of reconciler Tom Fitch

by Kathleen Hayes

He could play black gospel music like the best of them. He exuded joy not only with his fingers but with his whole body. He didn't just sit on the piano bench and play; he bounced around so much that it seemed a miracle he could keep his fingers on the right keys. When Tom Fitch played black gospel music, you couldn't help but catch the Spirit.

Tom has been called by many who knew him "a white musician with soul." How did a Caucasian Californian learn to play black gospel? The answer is inherent in Tom's vision for reconciliation not only of his own diverse musical talents but of the entire diverse and splintered world.

> **There was instant electricity across the room. ... Everyone was wondering how in the world a Caucasian brother had learned to play black gospel like that.**—*Freeman Miller*

Tom inherited his musical talents from his mother, who died when he was just shy of 5 years old. Music had been his comfort and hope during a lonely childhood, and he aspired to be a classical pianist. After putting his faith in Christ and experiencing true love and joy, perhaps for the first time, he joined his college's black gospel choir.

"I enrolled with some trepidation, wondering how I would be accepted, since there were no other whites in the group," Tom wrote in an autobiography. "But I heard them singing about Jesus in a way that touched me deeply, and that gave me the courage to believe I might somehow belong with them. What a delight to be warmly welcomed as a brother in Christ! I felt so privileged and joyful to sing and pray and move with them."

Tom carefully observed the accompanying style of their choir director, Helen Stevens, on the piano, and then he tried to mimic it. But improvisation always eluded him, and he struggled to produce a gospel sound similar to hers. Then one day after a rehearsal Tom sat down to try to play one of the songs. "She looked startled and said, 'Quick, somebody get a tambourine.' She had a person play the tambourine right in my ear to try to nurse along this budding miracle." Soon after this, Tom was playing well enough he could accompany the choir.

One Sunday afternoon the choir sang at Ephesian African Methodist Episcopal Church in Berkeley, Calif. When their director instructed him to go to the piano to accompany a song, "the congregation got real quiet as I sat down, but when I started playing, they started shouting so you could hardly hear the choir. I played, grinning from ear to ear. What a wondrous gift God had given! I had struggled for years to improvise the simplest melodies. And now, in what I believe can only be called a miracle, God had given me extraordinary gifts of improvisation to lift him in praise and break down barriers that divide his people."

Tom graduated from college with a dream of making a living in music, but he had no real prospects. Then one day he heard God speaking to him: "Don't let fear have any part in this decision. You know that I alone supply all of your needs. Don't be afraid to follow a dream."

After college Tom spent a summer at Voice of Calvary, a ministry developed by John Perkins in response to the needs of the African-American poor in his hometown of Mendenhall, Miss. While there primarily to learn and observe, Tom organized and directed a neighborhood children's choir. "It was one of the hardest things I had ever done, but in the end it was also one of the most satisfying. ... During that summer I began to have a new dream of what God might be calling me to do with my time and abilities. It was difficult to give up the goal of being a concert pianist, but when I left Mississippi I had a new vision of using music as a tool to serve the kingdom of God."

Race and culture: Tom's emphasis shifted to choral music, which he believed offered "much greater possibilities for involvement with people" and could be "a tool to bring people together across dividing lines of race and culture." When he moved to Philadelphia to study music at Temple University Graduate School in 1979, he soon discovered nearby Diamond Street Mennonite Church, an integrated congregation of African-Americans and Caucasian Americans, plus some native Africans, Palestinians and a few other internationals. The church's worship style reflected the African-American neighborhood where it was situated. A white man, Freeman Miller (now bishop of the Lancaster Conference churches in Philadelphia), and a black man, Charles Baynard (now retired), served as senior pastor and assistant pastor, respectively.

"We had just lost a gifted choir director and were praying for a new one," Freeman comments, "but we could never have dreamed up Tom Fitch; he was God's creation. On his first or second Sunday [as choir director], when he played 'God Has Smiled on Me' on that little piano squeezed into the front corner, Diamond Street Mennonite Church changed forever. There was instant electricity across the room. ... Of course, everyone was wondering how in

Tom Fitch died Dec. 12, 1997, in Minneapolis at the age of 45 after a 10-month battle with malignant melanoma. He is survived by his wife, Rebecca Ryman Fitch, and three children: Micah, 11; Aaron, 9; and Mari, 5; as well as his father, Charles, and brothers Bob and Bruce.

the world a white brother had learned to play black gospel like that."

The interracial choir thrived under Tom's leadership. Besides growing in number and ability, they made two cassette tapes (still available through the church), toured throughout the United States and Canada and sang at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Strasbourg, France, in 1984. Wherever they went, their message was to allow the love of Christ to break down racial barriers and build unity in him. Tom was devoted to the church, the choir and his Lord. "I loved that little church," Tom wrote. "In fact, when I finished graduate school in 1981, I decided to stay on there though the pay was almost nonexistent. For years I lived on next to nothing and watched God supply my needs just as he promised he would."

While Tom was at Diamond Street, Rebecca Ryman, who had just graduated from Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., and moved to Philadelphia to teach inner-city kids in 1980, began to attend the church and sing in the choir. They grew to know and love each other, eventually married in 1985 and were blessed with two sons (and later adopted a daughter). When the struggling church could not afford to pay Tom enough to support his family, he served with Mennonite Voluntary Service for several years, overseeing the construction of the Diamond Street Community Center gymnasium and earning a guaranteed $30 a month. As an MVSer, Tom rounded up volunteers to help out, convincing them of the importance of sports in the inner city and of the honor of helping the dream of a community gymnasium become a reality.

In 1988 Tom received an invitation to teach music for a year at Eastern Mennonite High School in Harrisonburg, Va. Upon returning to Philadelphia, he realized his position at Diamond Street would never grow into something to support a growing family. Although he searched for work in Philadelphia, nothing materialized. "I despaired of finding a church that shared a vision of reconciliation but was also large enough to support a more substantial music program," he wrote.

Then one day he learned about Park Avenue Methodist Church in Minneapolis, which described itself as an "inner-city, interracial church desiring to do a range of music, from classical to black gospel." He contacted the church, auditioned in April 1990 and was hired that same weekend. Tom and his family moved to Minneapolis that summer, and he became the full-time music director of a 1,200-member congregation that is about 65 percent white and 35 percent people of color. At Park Avenue, Fitch oversaw the chamber choir, sanctuary choir, gospel choirs, children's choirs and orchestras. He helped form an African drum ensemble and enabled a South African choir (the only gospel choir to sing at Nelson Mandela's inauguration) to tour in the United States.

'Free spirit': After Tom became a Christian, life became an adventure for him. Several weeks before his death, Tom told Freeman: "I'm not afraid of dying. It seems almost like an adventure, actually. But I hate so much to think of leaving Rebecca and my children behind." Charles summed it up succinctly at Tom's memorial service in Philadelphia on Feb. 8: "Tom was a man who loved life." Graham Cyster, a South African pastor who met Tom while leading a revival at Diamond Street, added, "I used to see Tom walking the streets, and he was always smiling. I liked him for that; he was a free spirit."

Tom's love and enthusiasm were indeed contagious—and he carried the message of racial reconciliation with him wherever he went. Tom's broad musical repertoire itself epitomized reconciliation—from classical to jazz, from pop to reggae and gospel. From Tom's perspective, all could carry the message of God's love. In Philadelphia, he inspired in Charles' daughter Estelle a love for classical music that she shared at his memorial service by singing a breathtaking classical rendition of "The Lord's Prayer." In Minneapolis, Tom helped the church bring in Sowah Mensah, a master drummer from Ghana, to direct an African drum ensemble comprised of children and teens from the neighborhood, many of whom faced the lures and dangers of local gang activity.

Tom saw his work in Park Avenue's music department as "a part of a greater whole." This was even more important to him than the personal opportunity to do the wide diversity of

Tom's dedication to Christ's message of racial reconciliation was as contagious as was his love for music. And he lived it wholeheartedly.

'A white musician with soul': Tom Fitch at the piano directs the Diamond Street Mennonite Church choir.

> **Tom … unplugged himself from the American dream and plugged himself into Calvary.**—*Graham Cyster*

'Blessed by the love of God': Tom Fitch (left) with sons Aaron and Micah, Rebecca and daughter, Mari.

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Fitch

music that Park Avenue desired. Music was Tom's way to communicate God's love to all those who needed it—children, parents, teens, the elderly, the poor. At the time of his death on Dec. 12, Tom was involved in developing a neighborhood music center that would ultimately provide the opportunity for talented African-Americans to join the ranks of the Minneapolis Chamber Symphony. He saw the African drum ensemble he helped start as "a first step in developing a center to use music to direct young people in a positive direction."

Tom had always loved music. But in Christ music had a clear purpose: sharing the message that God loves all people and wants us all to love one another as one body, regardless of race and ethnicity. Tom's dedication to Christ's message of racial reconciliation was as contagious as was his love for music. And he lived it wholeheartedly. He brought together the rich and the poor, black and white, Israeli and Palestinian, American and African, even city folks and country folks. Tom knew God's love for him, after many years of searching, and desperately wanted others to experience that love, too. "Tom never took the path of least resistance," says Keith Johnson of Park Avenue Methodist Church. "He was willing to walk the road of difficulty and even tension in order to send a message of reconciliation between the races."

Tom actually crossed racial lines much earlier in his life—without even realizing it and without realizing its future importance to his life's calling. Many of his grade-school friends in Berkeley were Japanese-Americans, but in junior high that slowly but definitely changed. "I didn't notice it was happening at first, but after awhile I realized that I never did anything with those friends anymore. I still thought they were great guys and would have loved to go to their houses and their parties, … but it didn't seem to work out anymore." He soon saw clear divisions in junior high between blacks, whites and Asians. When Tom entered ninth grade, the Berkeley public schools began a comprehensive desegregation program. Racial tensions, already evident at school and in the community, were heightened that year by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Tom vividly recalled dodging rocks as he rode his bike to school. God used these experiences to instill in Tom at an early age a desire to overcome the racial barriers that keep people from knowing and loving one another. He committed his life to that.

Love offering: Even after his death, Tom is bringing people together and spreading reconciliation. Half a dozen people committed their lives to Christ during his graveside service in Minneapolis. And the dreams he had for racial reconciliation are being carried on at Park Avenue, at Diamond Street and as far away as South Africa. A few weeks after his death, during the memorial service in Philadelphia, it was announced that Rebecca wanted the love offering intended for her and her children to go toward the completion of the Diamond Street Community Center's third-floor gymnasium instead. A lack of funding and volunteers since Tom's departure has inhibited the gymnasium's completion. Rebecca's thoughtfulness, plus an offering of well over $2,300, will give the project a needed boost. The gymnasium will be called the Thomas Michael Fitch Memorial Gymnasium. (See sidebar at left.)

Although the earthly adventures of Tom Fitch are over, his message of reconciliation plays on. Tom is no longer with us to pursue his dream, but he spread that dream to many others. "Tom touched people all the time," says Rebecca, "and he didn't even notice. That was the wonderful thing about Tom's touch on your life. It just happened. He loved life. He … was blessed by the love of God."

According to Graham Cyster: "Tom knew the secret that the American dream was only a dream. He knew he couldn't put any stock in that. So he unplugged himself from the American dream and plugged himself into Calvary. … We've messed around too long trying to bring the American dream into our churches. We have to take the dream of the kingdom back into the world. And that's where Tom lived his life. Tom and I dreamed about taking a multiracial choir to South Africa. I don't know how we're going to do it, but we will. Tom has left us a legacy."

Kathleen Hayes is a free-lance writer and editor who attended Diamond Street Mennonite Church. She now resides with her husband in Plainsboro, N.J.

Tax-deductible contributions may be made to Diamond Street Mennonite Church, earmarked for the Thomas Michael Fitch Memorial Fund and mailed to Diamond Street Mennonite Church, 1632 W. Diamond St., Philadelphia, PA 19121.

Jamaica conference celebrates 40th anniversary

KINGSTON, Jamaica—Four decades after the establishment of a Mennonite presence in Jamaica, there continues to be a need for a strong Mennonite testimony on the Caribbean island, says a former Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions worker in the country. Willard Heatwole attended the 40th annual delegate session of the Jamaica Mennonite Church March 6-8 at Kingston's Waterloo Mennonite Church, one of 13 member congregations.

During one business session, a pastor asked that the name of his congregation be changed because the word Mennonite is not easily recognizable and confused with Mormon. Heatwole says the delegate body was sympathetic but responded that other ways must be found to deal with the identity problem.

As part of the weekend celebration, Heatwole and his wife, Melba, were honored for their work, and longtime members were recognized. The first Mennonite congregation in Jamaica was founded in 1955.—*Virginia Conference and Board of Missions Connections*

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Anti-racism project to focus on congregations

CLEVELAND—The Damascus Road anti-racism project will shift to congregational focused trainings in 2000, its steering committee decided at its annual meeting April 17-18 at Lee Heights Community Church.

Eleven groups have signed up for 1999 trainings. Then in the following year, Damascus Road will conduct four regional trainings to introduce congregations and individuals to biblical and systemic anti-racism analysis.

The Damascus Road steering committee is made up of nine representatives from the project's 22 anti-racism teams.—*MCC News Service*

MBM wins three communication awards

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) communications staff has received three awards, including a best of class, in the Religious Public Relations Council's Victor DeRose/Paul M. Hinkhouse Memorial Communication Awards. The awards were presented at the RPRC's annual convention April 24.

MBM's five-part advertising campaign in conjunction with the Mennonite Church convention in Orlando, Fla., last summer was named best of class in the public relations/advertising category. MBM writer/photographer Christy Risser received an award of merit in the category of magazine article series for her four-part chronicle of Mennonite Voluntary Service work among refugees and immigrants in Texas. *Que Pasa,* the Orlando convention daily newsletter, received an award of excellence.—*MBM News Service*

For the third year in a row, First Mennonite Church of Indianapolis celebrated Lent with Witherspoon Presbyterian Church, an African-American congregation in the city. Past year's Lenten studies used various written materials as discussion starters. This year the two congregations together watched *Sacred Stories,* a video series featuring speakers and writers telling stories.—*MennoExpressions*

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Centenarian makes last fund-raising walk

MOUNDRIDGE, Kan.—Jake Daum says this was the last time. After all, he did turn 100 on Jan. 4.

On April 16, as he had 11 previous springs, the centenarian walked a heifer down a local country road as part of the Mid-Kansas Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale. Daum solicited more than $3,000 for his mile-long walk this year, bringing his 11-year total to $70,000 for MCC.

But Daum was unable to walk the entire stretch this year, so son-in-law Bill Stucky walked most of the mile. "I think it's time to quit because when you can't walk the whole mile, you aren't doing the whole job," Daum says.

The Kansas sale, held April 17-18 in Hutchinson, raised $470,000.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Canadian Mennonite encyclopedia planned

WINNIPEG—The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada has approved the creation of a one-volume Canadian Mennonite encyclopedia to update existing resources. It will supplement a three-volume history of Mennonites in Canada and the *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* which dates back to the 1950s, although an updated volume was published in 1990. The new encyclopedia's author will be Ted Regehr. —*Mennonite Historian*

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Events

"A Cup of Cold Water: Church Service for the World" conference, June 18-20, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. Sponsor: Elizabethtown College Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietistic Groups. Contact: 717-361-1470 or youngctr@acad.etown.edu.

"Women Doing Theology" conference, June 25-27, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Sponsors: Mennonite Central Committee Women's Concerns, Kansas Mennonite Women in Ministry. Contact: 717-859-3889 or gwen_m_groff@mail.mcc.org.

Workers

Fast, Alvin of Reedley, Calif., is starting a two-year Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in Reedley as material resource center coordinator.

Fonseca, Jose of Apopka, Fla., is starting a one-year MCC assignment in Apopka as a service intern.

Neufeld, Edwin and Marjorie of Elkhart, Ind., are starting two-year MCC assignments in Cambridge, Mass., Edwin as manager of the Ten Thousand Villages store and Marjorie as assistant manager of the International Cafe.

Pam, Chuwang of Los Angeles is starting a two-year MCC assignment in Los Angeles as a church planter.

Penner, Vicki was ordained May 3 as associate pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Births

Deaton, Joseph David Snodgrass, Feb. 25, to Julie (Matheson) and Rodney Deaton, Indianapolis.

Fajardo, Daniel Miguel, Feb. 18, to Eligio and Robin (Arnett) Fajardo, Indianapolis.

Fetterman, Benjamin Mitchell, Feb. 15, to Annie and Dan Fetterman, Kirkwood, Pa.

Hershberger, Joshua David, April 3, to James and Kathy (Mast) Hershberger, Hartville, Ohio.

Janzen, Jacob Thomas, April 13, to Mark and Shelley (Osborne) Janzen, Harvard, Neb.

Jensen, Anikka Lauren, March 11, to Keith and Michelle (Ropp) Jensen, Sarasota, Fla.

Long, Ian Mark, March 25, to Deana (Barr) and Jeffrey Long, Soap Lake, Wash.

Norr, Leah Rachelle, March 23, to Jamie (Bruggeman) and Jerry Norr, Wooster, Ohio.

Pfister, Oksana Lee, March 20, 1993, received for adoption Feb. 10, 1998, by Dana (Geyer) and Kenneth Pfister, Harleysville, Pa.

Pirrung, Molly Louise, Feb. 7, to Ed and Kristine (Beiler) Pirrung, Lancaster, Pa.

Short, Graeme Christian, April 8, to Alysa (Frey) and Christopher Short, Archbold, Ohio.

Stutzman, Alexis Jania, March 10, to Brad and Crystal (Poehler) Stutzman, Wood River, Neb.

Talbott, Margo Helen, Feb. 9, to David and Rhonda (Clemens) Talbott, Indianapolis.

Wilgress, Jonathan Douglas, April 12, to Don and Sue (Bowlby) Wilgress, New Hamburg, Ont.

Yoder, Benjamin Reed, March 23, to Brian and Cathy (Reed) Yoder, Wooster, Ohio.

Zehr, Ashley Joy, March 20, to Sharon and Tim Zehr, Willow Street, Pa.

Marriages

Baasch/Hastetler: Kimberly Baasch, Cairo, Neb., and Eric Hastetler, Cairo, March 28, by Denton Jantzi.

Behrends/Herschberger: Vicki Behrends, Fithian, Ill., and Richard Herschberger, Arthur, Ill., April 11, by Phil Schrock.

Beshara/Neff: Tarek Beshara, South Bend, Ind., and Stacy Neff, South Bend, April 10, by Janice Yordy Sutter and David Sutter.

Brown/Lopez: Lora Brown, Goshen, Ind., and Ramon Lopez, Guatemala, Feb. 21, by Steve Thomas.

Pierce/Yoder: Todd Pierce, Norwalk, Iowa, and Gena Yoder, Fort Dodge, Iowa, Feb. 21, by Tim Squire.

Deaths

Blough, Paul, 83, Wooster, Ohio, died March 26. Survivors: wife, Audra; son, John; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: March 30 at Wooster by Norma Duerksen.

Dyck, Frank Maynard, 75, Moundridge, Kan., died April 6. Survivor: wife, Helen. Burial: April 8 at Moundridge by Tim Kliewer.

Question #9:

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Erb, Roy B., 80, Lancaster, Pa., died March 25. Survivors: wife, F. Ruth; children Ruth Martin, Miriam Allen, John, James; 14 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 28 at Lancaster by Tom Horst and Ernest Hess.

Krady, H. Martin, 96, Salunga, Pa., died April 6. Survivors: children John, Jay, Wilmer, Robert; 11 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: April 9 at Manheim, Pa., by Sam Thomas.

Kulp, Harold D., 74, Sellersville, Pa., died April 2 of injuries in an auto accident. Survivors: wife, Gladys; children John, Joel, Philip, Julia Leazenby, Rebecca Clemens; 14 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: April 7 at Hatfield, Pa., by Michael Meneses and Hubert Schwartzentruber.

Kurtz, Anna Hershey, 94, Kinzers, Pa., died March 25 of a heart attack. Survivors: children Hershey, Willis, Esther Mann; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: March 28 at Kinzers by Richard Buckwalter.

Classifieds

Bluffton College seeks a ***director of degree completion program*** in organizational management. Ph.D. or MBA preferred; other master's degree considered. Administrative responsibilities will require a multi-talented individual to supervise the program's staff, design curricula, project and monitor budgets, promote innovative programs, ensure academic quality and student satisfaction, recruit faculty and students, and garner support from faculty, staff, students and administrators as well as from business, industry and community leaders. The director will provide leadership for the development of new markets and/or programs in keeping with the mission of Bluffton College. Some teaching is expected.

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Send letter of interest, resume or vitae, three letters of reference and transcripts to Joetta H. Schlabach, special assistant to the dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Review of applications will begin June 1, 1998 and continue until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/staffvac.

Dock Woods Community, a growing CCRC near Lansdale, Pa., Montgomery County, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of manager—human resources. This position plans, organizes and manages the human resource department for our community. A bachelor's degree in human resource management or related field is required. Experience in the long-term care field is a plus.

Send resume and salary requirements to: Edward D. Brubaker, executive director, Dock Woods Community, 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446.

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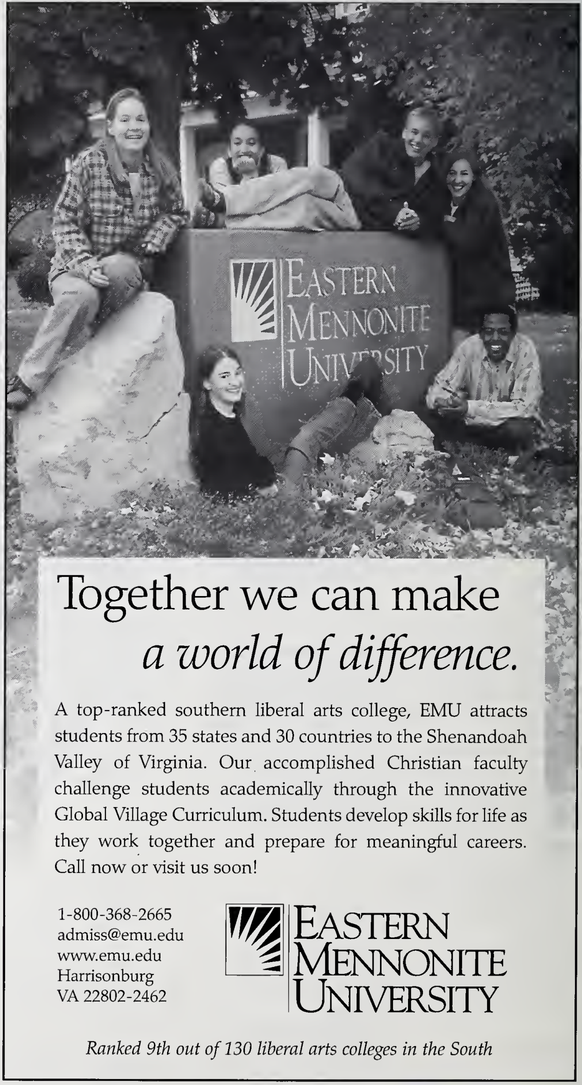
International Guest House, Washington, D.C.: One-year ***voluntary service*** positions open at the International Guest House, a bed and breakfast sponsored by the Allegheny Conference. Needed: one couple in September, one single at the end of May, one single at the end of August. Call 202-726-5808.



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Bethany Birches Camp, Plymouth, Vt., has paid positions available June 28-Aug. 21: ***counselors, cook, maintenance leader.*** Also needed are weekly ***kitchen and maintenance volunteers***. Call 802-672-3959.

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Classified advertising space is available in *The Mennonite* to congregations, conferences and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, with a minimum of $25. To place an ad, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller. Deadline is three weeks prior to date of issue.

by Omar Eby

The cravings of our little egos

Lord, who is like you?—Psalm 35:10

Who art Thou? Who art Thou?" My eyes turn away from my ego, the lust after self-knowledge, and the maniacal egocentrism of 20th-century psychology and preaching. My eyes turn to the One who made me in God's image, in whom I find my soul's delight and definition, even as time moves me at 60 farther from my Alpha (my beginning), closer to Omega (my end), until I whisper, "Stay with me, Lord, because it is toward (the) evening" (Luke 24:29) of my life.

Who am I? Who am I? Who is like unto me? is the cry of the 20th-century ego: me, me, me. All the chatter about self-knowledge, self-actualization, self-fulfillment. I am weary of it; sometimes at my Christian university it is all I hear, even in chapel. I remind myself that the mission of an educational institution is the development of youth. I earn my bread by it. But is there no relief? No one to call us away from the cravings of our little egos? Give us spiritual leaders with vision, not more clever people trained in psycho-therapeutic-theology. God!

There is none like you, O Lord. Of me there are 350 million, because you are an extravagant spendthrift. Save me from the despair of that thought. Amen.

A beauty on the dark body of a common thing

How can we sing the songs in a foreign land?—Psalm 137:4

A grackle at the bird feeder distracts me this morning. Such extravagant beauty invested in such a common fellow. In the meadows below my lawn and in the orchard on the hills beyond, 10,000 grackles feed. Here at the house, this solitary feeder flashes his radiance: first a lacquered black, then feathers burnished to deep blues, purples, with a glint of forest green, a hint of gold. The cold yellow gem of an eye studs the sable head. And it is a cold eye, alert, appraising, calculating, full of guile. The eye of a survivor. No wonder in the fall one sees them spiraling up like 10,000 drops from a huge fountain, or gauze-like beaded curtains waving across a scud-filled November sky. At that distance one cannot see their spectacularly subtle beauty. Their black seed-like appearance seems fitting.

I try to imagine: What if cardinals were as plenteous as grackles? Look out on a drab meadow in February and see 10,000 flickers and glints of red. The old willow above the chicken house/tool shed blooming a thousand angular red blossoms out of season. Two thousand piercing whistles every few minutes, like the cardinal makes. Would it not seem a horror—a surrealistic dream of Armageddon—the landscape splashed with so much red? God's aesthetic wisdom gives us a bright flash of red in January white, a chip of scarlet in February gray. But the burnished black grackle congregates in a flitting cloud, as befits the fall and winter backdrops of muted colors.

"How can we sing the songs of the Lord in a foreign land?"

O, look at their birds. Look closely at the foreign landscape—if one cannot yet look with love on the foreign people. Discover the beauty peculiar to the territory. As I once did 40 years ago in bleak, barren Somalia: the rare oryx in the gray bush; the gem-throated sunbird on a thorn bush twig, the seamless meeting of ocean and sky; the equivalent of burnished grackles at one's bird feeder.

All the physical aspects of nature are a robe to clothe God—the whole thesis of Psalm 104. Sitting in Babylon, sing a song about that land's beauty. It, too, lies in God's providence. And sing, too, the old songs of the heart—wrung from the memories of yesterday's Zion. Then slowly, the beauty of the foreigner in the foreign land emerges. One joins then their songs of the Lord in their homeland.

Let me not forget the psalm of the grackle, a beauty on the dark body of a common thing. Amen.

Word and Spirit appears approximately once each month. Omar Eby is professor of English at Eastern Mennonite University.

All the physical aspects of nature are a robe to clothe God. Sitting in Babylon, sing a song about that land's beauty. It, too, lies in God's providence.

New books to help our faith:

- *A Mennonite Statement and Study on Violence* (Faith & Life Press, 1998, $8.95 U.S., $12.25 Cdn.) integrates the violence statement adopted in 1997 by the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church with a six-session study and action guide.
- *Confronting Systems of Violence* by John M. Swomley (Fellowship Publications, 1998, $12.95 U.S.) is the memoirs of a peace activist.
- *Only the Sword of the Spirit* by Jacob A. Loewen and Wesley J. Prieb (Kindred Press, 1998, $15.95 U.S., $19.95 Cdn.) asks, How do the Sermon on the Mount and the Epistle of James impact your life?
- *Hosea, Amos* by Allen R. Guenther and *2 Corinthians* by V. George Shillington (Herald Press, 1998, each $19.99 U.S., $28.50 Cdn.) are the latest volumes in the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series.
- *Listening to God: Using Scripture as a Path to God's Presence* by Jan Johnson (NavPress, 1998, $12 U.S.) helps readers use the Bible as a personal way of relating to God.

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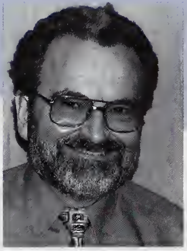

J. Lorne Peachey

'Too chicken to climb the hill?'

Out for a warm spring afternoon bicycle ride the other day, I took my usual route along western Pennsylvania's Youghiogheny River until the road starts up one of the steepest hills I've ever come across in my rides. As usual, I turned around at the base of the hill and retraced my route home.

What wasn't usual was for the woman who lives in the trailer at the bottom of the hill to be out in her lawn. "Too chicken to climb the hill?" she called with a laugh.

"That's right!" I yelled back, not wanting to break my cadence or take the time to stop and tell her what I really wanted to say: "I did climb that hill. Once. I suffered for days afterward. My knees ached, my shins were sore, even my seat protested my vain attempt up that hill. Definitely not worth it."

Chalk it up to having lived almost 60 years, but I'm also coming to the same conclusion in my life as a Christian. Do I have to solve every mystery—for example, the two creation accounts in Genesis—in order to accept both? Do I have to resolve every paradox—e.g., the God of war in the Old Testament with the God of love in the New—in order to love this God? Do I have to understand what Paul really meant about being equals in Galatians 3:28 (as compared with his gender distinctions in 1 Corinthians 13) to make equality part of my life?

Is the same true for the church? Are there some hills too difficult to climb, some obstacles too high to surmount? We all have our favorite example, but the list would surely include issues like divorce and remarriage, women in leadership, membership for military personnel and homosexuality.

It may be possible to solve these issues, but will the results be worth the effort? Our history is littered with divisions brought on by attempts to conquer all sorts of hills in one way or another.

But as I read the Gospels, I see Jesus paying little attention to problem-solving. When confronted with difficult issues, he sidestepped what would have started him up that hill. Take the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11), the matter of paying taxes to the government (Matthew 22:17-22) or the question of who gave him authority (Mark 11:27-33).

We must choose our hills carefully, making sure they do not keep us from doing the most important work.

Instead, Jesus pushed these problems aside for the ultimate issue. That for him was summarized in two sentences: Love God. Love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40).

Hill-climbing, both in our personal lives and in the church, has its place. But we must choose which hills we tackle carefully, making sure our efforts benefit in the long run and do not leave us exhausted—too burned out to do the most important work Jesus calls us to.—*jlp*

Predecessors win five ACP awards

Pardon us if we toot our horn, but we will admit to a bit of pride.

At its annual convention last month, the Associated Church Press gave five awards to this publication's two predecessors. *Gospel Herald* received two first-place awards, and the former *The Mennonite* won one first-place award and two honorable mentions.

Gospel Herald's awards were for two editorials by managing editor Valerie Weaver. "Out of the Strong, Something Sweet" (Oct. 7) was judged the best magazine editorial for 1997; "extremely impressive ... almost like the Sermon on the Mount," said the judge.

Weaver's editorial "We're Losing More than 120 Members" (Nov. 4) got first place in the editorial courage category. "This editorial has all ingredients of courage," said the judge. "It is simply written and stated, indicating what Mennonites lost when one of their conferences excluded a church."

A Jean Janzen poem, "December 7, 1941," from the Nov. 25 issue won the former *The Mennonite* a first place in poetry. "Illuminating and poignant," said the judge, citing its simplicity in portraying "a terrible event."

The Mennonite's two honorable mentions were for best seasonal piece ("Tainted Thanks" by David Schrock-Shenk, Nov. 25) and for a first-person account ("Questions As I Prepare to Die" by Judy Schroeder Tomlonson, April 8).

The Associated Church Press is a professional organization of more than 200 religious publications, both Protestant and Catholic.

We who work on the successor to *Gospel Herald* and the former *The Mennonite* are pleased with this recognition from our peers. While awards are not what we're about, they do spur us on, not only to continue two traditions, but also to do an even better job at being both a source of information and a forum for discussion for the new, integrating Mennonite Church.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

May 19, 1998

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church and the military

5 Time for change, change for time
8 Worker joins crusade of apology
10 Air Force captain makes room for Spirit
12 Basketball team takes up arms

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

The search

Thank you for the helpful article "A Search for Faithfulness: Should Conferences Discipline Noncomplying Congregations?" (*The Mennonite*, April 28). The three principles offered provide a useful core for further discussion and action. May I offer an additional observation and suggestion?

We want to honor our commitment to stated positions, such as our "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective," and we also want to honor the spiritual discernment of congregations that find themselves called to differing ministries. Could we not continue to affirm our confession of faith and, at the same time, create a category for relationships with dissenting congregations or conferences? For example, North Central Conference has accepted the confession of faith except for the statement on women in ministry. I assume they have carefully discerned their response and are being faithful to what they understand the Bible to speak to their context.

I believe we honor the Lord of the church better by finding ways to remain together in our discernment rather than expelling those who wish to be part of us but disagree on biblical interpretation because of the context in which they live and minister.—*Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind.*

When a congregation joins other congregations in a conference, each congregation and its leaders typically promise to uphold and support conference decisions. Membership in a conference is voluntary but must have integrity to be meaningful. Congregations that refuse to support important conference decisions thus violate their own promise as well as the expectations of other congregations. To maintain the integrity and honesty of their own voluntary commitments, it would seem to me that such congregations should withdraw from the conference with which they disagree. If a congregation continues to claim membership in a conference but also continues to refuse to support conference decisions, then the conference must address the situation or else change its own understanding of membership.

Conference disciplinary procedures are efforts to restore clarity and integrity in the relationships among congregations in the conference. While these procedures are often painful and could certainly be improved, their necessity is created by those congregations that refuse to honor their own commitments to other congregations in the conference.

Perhaps this description is valid only for Mennonite Church area conferences. If so, I confess that I do not understand what commitment General Conference Mennonite Church congregations have to each other or to their conference. Perhaps it would be useful for church leadership and periodicals to explore in more detail what commitments congregations make to each other, especially when they have different traditions and theological assumptions.—*Roger Farmer, Wayland, Iowa*

While some good biblical study obviously went into "A Search for Faithfulness," I question the impression given that the Sermon on the Mount supports the practice of enforcing holy living by excluding noncomplying individuals from churches. In fact, one of the things Jesus explicitly prohibited was judging other people, warning that the desire to judge others has its sources in blindness to the depth of our own sin (Matthew 7:1-5).

Underlying Jesus' commands in the Sermon on the Mount is the idea that these things also describe the character of God (Matthew 5:43-48). Entirely apart from our deserving it and at great cost to himself, God embraces us in Christ. Jesus calls us to embrace others like that. It's a mistake to assume that Jesus is an ally to the traditional Mennonite practice of excluding so-called sinners from his churches.—*John Zimmerman, Rocky Ford, Colo.*

"A Search for Faithfulness" was a welcome article with a helpful perspective. Hopefully this will put our conversations on a higher plane. "Never does Paul give up on even the most abominable congregation" is a sobering note. Many delegates in Franconia Conference were praying for a different way than "no longer recognizing Germantown Mennonite Church." Obviously more felt the other way. But many on both sides are grieved with the resultant hurts, estrangements and misunderstandings.—*Clayton L. Swartzentruber, Lansdale, Pa.*

The authors of "A Search for Faithfulness" note that Paul never disfellowshipped a congregation; he only worked hard to see that those who led others astray were thwarted. But should not those who deliberately choose to follow a leader after the leader has been disciplined be under the same discipline as the leader?—*Harold N. Miller, Corning, N.Y.*

the Mennonite

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Cover photo
by Dale D. Gehman

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Glen Guyton leaves the military to work for the church.

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When the local high school basketball team dons military outfits

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

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say readers say

Revised discipline document

Ruth and Timothy Stoltzfus Jost's letter (*The Mennonite*, April 28) contains some factual errors we would like to correct. The document "Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials" has been in revision since April 1997. We anticipate completing this process by summer 1998. At that point, the document will be tested with conference ministers and others who have given counsel over the years.

Refinement of this document has been slowed by limited staff time to work on it as well as by new disciplinary processes that continue to emerge and shed new light on an appropriate disciplinary protocol. We are also discovering that we will probably never have a "final form" document. Rather, we will continue to change and refine the procedures as we learn more about appropriate ways for the church to discipline those granted ministerial credentials.—*Everett J. Thomas, president, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Elkhart, Ind.*

Bible-based loss

I am grieving the loss of the Bible-based lead article that I was accustomed to in *Gospel Herald.* To have Readers Say at the beginning is like being served leftovers from last week before getting to the main issue for this week. I am not sure what purpose is being served by printing Readers Say for other readers to read. I understand that it is important for the editor to know what the readers are saying, but I have not found it uplifting to my own spiritual journey. I subscribe for the Bible-based lead article. If this does not return, I do not plan to renew my subscription.—*Martha Horst, Dalton, Ohio*

Christianity and culture

Thank you for the space devoted to music in the church in the April 21 *The Mennonite.* While music plays an important role in worship, I believe that the church is often asking the wrong questions when debating the "worship wars." While issues of taste and style of music are important to address, we should also be asking questions concerning how the church relates to secular society.

While Martin Luther did use the popular music of his day, he also commissioned the best composers of his time to create a new genre of music for the church. The result was the chorale. Unfortunately, for the last century the church has allowed secular society to set the agenda in the arts and adopted whatever it has created. All too often, when Christianity and popular culture combine, one is diminished. And it isn't popular culture.—*Ken Rodgers, Lawrence, Kan.*

Understanding homosexuality

I just finished reading the three letters on homosexuality and discipline in the April 21 *The Mennonite.* Each writer seems to lack the understanding of why the church must confront homosexuality and not allow into membership those who openly practice it. The issue is not the fact that all have sinned and that Jesus loves us anyway. The point that must be made is that Jesus never said sin was acceptable. He loved and reached out to sinners in order to show them how to be forgiven and how to be transformed.

The emphasis of Rainbow Mennonite Church and Germantown Mennonite Church is that homosexuality is not a sin if lovingly practiced in a monogamous relationship. That is totally unbiblical and un-Mennonite. Sinners are welcome in my church and always will be. But they will not be members long if they openly declare that they can practice anything God calls an abomination and not have any eternal consequences.—*Randy Evers, Harrisonville, Mo.*

I invite a person to write a series of articles which clearly describes in lay terms how the theological system of fundamentalism entered the Mennonite church, how it differed from Mennonite theology and what its impact is on our church today. Understanding how fundamentalism affects our interpretations of Scripture may shed some light on the deep divisions we are experiencing over the matter of sexual orientation.

When you combine the literalism of fundamental theology with the natural aversion to anything other than the heterosexual orientation of the majority of the population, it is not hard to understand why there is such strong rejection of any other orientation.

But even those committed to a fundamentalist interpretation of Scripture do not out of hand reject the insights and lessons learned by scientists and scholars. Why then do they reject such advances in knowledge and understanding of human sexual orientation? Who among us chose his or her sexual orientation? Would it not more nearly fulfill the principles of Christianity if we would nurture and strengthen the commitments and relationships of everyone within the church rather than excluding and denying the basic personhood of some members?—*Eleanor Kaufman, Newton, Kan.*

In 1896, my grandmother put together a wall-type family register. She stitched these words at the bottom: "Read these few lines and think of me. / When long, long years have fled, / When you are gay and happy, / And I perhaps am dead." I think my grandmother would be shocked at today's use of the word "gay." I am. —*Jonathan Stoltzfus, Goshen, Ind.*

Rediscovering respect

The nation was shocked recently by the massacre by two boys at the middle school in Jonesboro, Ark. Our adult Sunday school class at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, wondered what that community, including parents, grandparents, school and church, had done to prepare these boys for the choices they would need to make in life.

Most of the men in our class admitted that we had grown up with guns in the house. And we all said that our parents instilled in us the need to be careful with the guns. We were taught to show respect for the rights of others. It seems that these boys had never been exposed to such teaching.

Why did these two boys go on such a senseless rampage? They had easy access to guns and ammunition, and society taught them that it is OK to respond with violence when you feel you have been wronged. They seem not to have understood the consequences of their actions for themselves or their victims. We all need to rediscover respect for others, living it and teaching it to our children.—*Paul I. Dyck for adult Sunday school class, First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio*

Time for change, change for time

Coming of year 2000 creates computer issues

At the advent of a new millenium, the future is now for Larry Becker and his colleagues.

Becker is data processing manager for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and responsible for getting his employer—and its computerized equipment—into 2000 and beyond.

Computers run many of the world's operations. The well-documented problem is that once 1999 flips by, the internal clocks in many of those computers and their programs—which read only the last two digits of the year—may confuse 2000 with 1900.

So Becker is now examining "anything with a date" at GC headquarters in Newton, Kan., from accounting software to the office's voice-mail and elevator.

To not address the 2000 computer problem —called compliance—could leave Mennonite institutions living in the past. For example, at Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA), retirement funds could show a balance for 1900 instead of 2000, says spokesperson Judy Martin Godshalk. Without changes to Bluffton (Ohio) College's administrative software, "You couldn't run payroll, you couldn't do registration," says Deb Turner, director of administrative computing.

Compliance problems could affect heating and cooling of facilities, security systems and connections with outside businesses. But for many Mennonite institutions, software seems to be the biggest issue. GC and Mennonite Central Committee headquarters are looking at changing their accounting software. "But it's probably due for a change anyhow," says Phil Horst, MCC director of computer services.

Bluffton has a contract with an outside company to make the college's administrative software compliant. The college also hopes to replace all noncompliant personal computers in the next two years. At Hesston (Kan.) College, most administrative software was written in-house, so compliance problems can be addressed by staff.

But most institutions are not worried about compliance. "Unless we run into unforeseen problems, we don't think this is a real big problem," Becker says.

For MMA, however, compliance is a top priority because of the agency's size, complexity and nature of business. Sixty people—only two of them full time—have or are working on compliance issus. Of crucial importance, Godshalk says, is staying linked with financial institutions, telecommunications networks and other businesses. MMA has also installed a new $40,000 backup system. "You spend the money because you have to operate," Godshalk says.

MMA is also overseeing compliance at Mennonite Board of Missions, which is facing either replacing or updating its computer network software.—*Rich Preheim*

> "Unless we run into unforeseen problems, we don't think this is a real big problem."
>
> —*Larry Becker*

Jim Bishop

Eastern Mennonite Seminary dean George R. Brunk III places a hood on Marie H. Leaman Shenk, who received her master's degree during EMS commencement April 25. The ceremony kicked off this year's college and seminary graduation season, which will end May 24.

Parade of graduates concludes May 24

By the time the strains of the last recessional fade away on May 24, an estimated 1,176 students will have become members of the class of 1998 from the nine General Conference Mennonite Church- and Mennonite Church-related colleges and seminaries.

- Commencement ceremonies already held and number of graduates: **Eastern Mennonite Seminary,** Harrisonburg, Va., April 25, 31 students; **Eastern Mennonite University,** Harrisonburg, April 26, 254 bachelor's and 30 master's students; **Canadian Mennonite Bible College,** Winnipeg, April 27, 24 students; **Hesston (Kan.) College,** May 3, 166 students.
- Upcoming ceremonies and expected number of graduates: **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary,** Elkhart, Ind., May 22, 41 students; **Bethel College,** North Newton, Kan., May 24, 135 students; **Bluffton (Ohio) College,** May 24, 223 bachelor's and seven master's students; **Goshen (Ind.) College,** May 24, 220 students; **Conrad Grebel College,** Waterloo, Ont., May 22-24, 45 to 50 students.

Caribbean churches plan for seminary

New institution hopes to open in fall of 1999

SALUNGA, Pa.—For years, the Caribbean has been the only region in Latin America without an Anabaptist seminary. But church leaders from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, in cooperation with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) hope to change that next year.

Plans are being made to begin Seminario Anabautista del Caribe (SAC), or Caribbean Anabaptist Seminary, by the fall of 1999 to train pastors and lay leaders. EMS, in Harrisonburg, Va., will offer program consultation and assessment. EMM, headquartered in Salunga, Pa., is helping with the initial development and networking of churches and has committed to giving seed money to help the seminary get started.

SAC will offer theological education by extension, with instructors traveling to sites throughout the region to teach classes. No location has yet been determined for the seminary's base.

Jose Santiago, EMM Latin America director, has served as a resource person for much of the exploratory work during the past 18 months. He says churches that relate to EMM in the Dominican Republic have been asking for biblical and theological training for years. "We have seminars and workshops but nothing that is steady or running all year long," Santiago says.

In the Dominican Republic, the Faro Divino-North District and Consejo Iglesias Evangelica Menonitas Dominicano, which both relate to EMM, and the Conferencia Evangelica Menonita Dominicana, which relates to the Evangelical Mennonite Church, have indicated at least 45 potential students when the seminary opens next fall.

In Puerto Rico, the Convencion de las Iglesias Evangelicas Menonitas de Puerto Rico, which relates to Mennonite Board of Missions, and the Caribbean Mennonite Mission, an independent group of congregations, have also offered their support for the seminary. In addition, Santiago has learned that the Church of the Brethren in both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic is planning to participate.

"We have a large territory to cover, with a lot of churches," Santiago says.

He hopes the seminary will also eventually serve church leaders in Cuba and other areas of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Several Virginia Conference-related churches in Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad, who speak English, are also possible participants.

In addition to the proposed Caribbean seminary, other Anabaptist seminaries in Latin America are SEMILLA, based in Guatemala City, and schools in Asuncion, Paraguay, covering the southern part of South America, and in Bògota, Colombia, covering the northern part of the continent.—*Carol L. Wert for EMM News Service*

Guatemala-based seminary ready for new facility

AKRON, Pa.—SEMILLA, the Central American Anabaptist seminary, is preparing to start construction on administrative offices now that land has been purchased for the Guatemala City-based school. The new facility will bring under one roof SEMILLA and CASAS, its cross-cultural program. They currently operate from two separate rented offices in Guatemala City.

Higueros

The first phase is building a structure to house both program offices and dorms for CASAS participants. Dean Mario Higueros hopes construction can begin the first week of June. "We have to raise the money first," he says. "Maybe not all the money, but enough to start."

The land purchase was made possible in part by a Mennonite Central Committee contribution of $70,000 through an ongoing fund to support SEMILLA. To help with construction, MCC is organizing groups of 10 to 12 people from North America to work alongside Central American teams for two-week periods this summer.

SEMILLA is operated by 10 Central American Mennonite conferences. Since its inception in 1983, the seminary has provided biblical and theological education by extension for Mennonite pastors and laypeople. Eighty full-time students are now enrolled from Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Instructors travel to various extension locations to teach and evaluate students' work.—*Delphine Martin of MCC News Service*

Couple steps back after four decades of Asian ministries in Far East, North America

NEWTON, Kan.—There's a Taiwanese saying: If you don't have an ox, use a horse.

Hugh and Janet Sprunger, who recently resigned from their work with Chinese / Asian ministries for the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM), say they were there "as the horse. A horse works much less well in a rice field than an ox, but it's better than nothing."

The Sprungers spent 1954 to 1978 in Taiwan with the Commission on Overseas Mission and from 1980 to 1994 in Hong Kong with COM. When they returned to North America, they took on the role as coordinators for Chinese (later Asian) ministries, working to help area conferences relate to the widely scattered Asian congregations and groups in the United States and Canada.

Much of the Sprungers' work during their four years with CHM has involved communication. CHM's initial Chinese ministries lumped together mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese and Taiwan Chinese. "North Americans said, 'They're Chinese, they're all alike,' and could not understand why this group could not choose one leader or spokesperson from among themselves," Hugh says. "But they were not alike. We spent a lot of time working with misunderstandings."

In addition to enhancing North American Mennonites' understanding of Asians, the Sprungers tried to help Asians feel more at home in Mennonite structures.

"I liked to point to Darrell Fast [now General Conference Mennonite Church moderator and a pastor in North Newton, Kan.] when he was pastoring in Toronto," Hugh says. "He'd spend several hours each month visiting with [Chinese pastor] Winfred Soong. When Darrell went to a conference or a meeting, he'd take Winfred along, and after a while, Winfred began to feel like a Mennonite pastor."

The Sprungers also encouraged cooperation between English-speaking congregations and Chinese or other Asian groups that used their church buildings. One way to do this was to integrate the children and youth—who spoke much better English than their elders—in English-speaking Sunday school activities.

"It's just like the Mennonites when they came to North America and spoke only German," Janet says. "The young people will leave the [native-language] church for English-speaking churches and institutions unless there is something to help hold them."

One of the highlights of the Sprungers' four years in Chinese / Asian ministries in North America has been seeing the emerging young leadership. "They have vision and passion for mission, good English skills and larger gifts to share with the church," Hugh says. "The cream rises to the top in every culture.

"Some of these pastors are winning more people to Christ and baptizing more people per year than many of our English-speaking congregations. One pastor told us, 'We only baptized 17 last year; this year we want 50.' How many Anglo congregations could say that?"

The Sprungers say they are not retiring, only stepping back to allow Asian church leaders to come to the table and speak for themselves. Shoua Moua of Arvada, Colo., is the new CHM liaison with Hmong churches; Kuaying Teng of St. Catharines, Ont., is the Laotian representative; and Nhien H. Pham of Calgary represents the Vietnamese constituency.—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

"North Americans said, 'They're Chinese, they're all alike.' ... But they were not alike."

—*Hugh Sprunger*

Lecturer: Vietnam experience offers lessons for today

BLUFFTON, Ohio—As U.S. and Canadian government policies have led to the deaths of half a million children in Iraq, Perry Bush says North American Mennonites should look at recent history.

"Reviewing the Mennonite experience in Vietnam ought to spark some newer reflections about the kind of burdens that a prophetic Mennonite past might ask us to carry today," says Bush, history professor at Bluffton (Ohio) College. "Maybe this burden means not always being nice. Maybe it means getting in the way."

He made his comments April 24 as the 1998 C. Henry Smith Peace Lecturer at Bluffton.

CPT says its piece at Israeli anniversary

David Hiebert

Christian Peacemaker Teams steering committee member Marilyn Miller (right) visits at the CPT booth with a participant at a celebration of Israel's 50th anniversary, held April 29-May 3 in Orlando, Fla. The event drew 8,000 Christian Zionists. Seven CPT members attended to draw attention to Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

Worker joins crusade of apology

Walkers out to rebuild bridges with Muslims, Jews

ELKHART, Ind.—On July 15, 1999, the 900th anniversary of the day 11th-century Crusaders "liberated" Jerusalem by obliterating nearly all its Muslim, Jewish and Eastern Christian population, a small group of 20th-century Christians will apologize.

And Christy Risser will be there.

"According to our history, the Crusades ended 600 to 700 years ago. According to their history, they have not ended."

—Christy Risser

Risser left May 4 from her home in Goshen, Ind., for a 15-month term with the Reconciliation Walk, an interdenominational effort to "retrace the footsteps of the Crusaders in apology for their deeds and in demonstration of the true meaning of the cross," the group says. "We deeply regret the atrocities committed in the name of Christ by our predecessors."

"That evil put into motion a series of events that still affect us today," says Risser, whose responsibilities will include promotion and publicity. "I can't change what [the Crusaders] did 900 years ago, but I can change the way that wrong perpetuates itself today."

Half of Risser's support comes from the Mennonite Middle East Reference Group, which consists of Eastern Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Board of Missions, Commission on Overseas Mission, Mennonite Central Committee, Rosedale Mennonite Missions and the Mennonite Brethren's MBMS International. Risser is also serving half-time as a volunteer with MBM, communicating about MBM workers in Europe and the Middle East.

The Reconciliation Walk officially was launched with a day of prayer on Nov. 27, 1995, in Clermont-Ferrand, France, the site of Pope Urban II's infamous call to "take back from the pagans God's land," which initiated the Crusades. On Easter Sunday 1996, groups of walkers started traveling from Germany and France, averaging 18 to 22 miles per day. Last year, 650 Western Christians from 24 nations brought a message of apology and expressed their desire for reconciliation in nearly 100 cities, towns and villages throughout Turkey. Walkers carry printed apologies in both their own and local languages and wear T-shirts stating the essence of the Reconciliation Walk's message: "We apologize."

Risser

"According to our history, the Crusades ended 600 to 700 years ago. According to their history, they have not ended," Risser says. "The [Persian] Gulf War in the Middle East was referred to as the latest crusade. ... It has got to stop. Somewhere, somehow, someone must start rebuilding the bridges."

Prayer-walking teams of no more than 10 people will cover portions of the route during short-term volunteer assignments of at least 10 days. But, Risser emphasizes, participants are not to "win coverts" because that would be perceived as another crusade. "For so many years, what [Christians] have been is violent, hateful and genocidal," Risser says. "[Jews and Muslims] cannot hear what we are saying."

During her 15 months, she will be in eight countries on behalf of the Reconciliation Walk: Cypress, Egypt, England, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey.

Risser says the Reconciliation Walk should resonate with Mennonites. "We claim to be a church involved in vision, healing and hope," she says. "What could be more involved in vision, healing and hope than rebuilding bridges destroyed for 600 years?"

Risser knows the Reconciliation Walk won't bring peace to the Middle East overnight. "If it causes some good ... ," she says, "then I will be a part of having brought about some peace and reconciliation, which is at the center of the call of Jesus to us all."—*Tom Price of MBM News Service*

Crusading against history

Between 1095 and 1291, Western Europeans conducted at least eight Crusades to take and maintain control of the Holy Land. Their efforts were marked by mass killings of people who were not Western European Christians. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099, they slaughtered all Muslims as well as many Jews in the city. But governance and control of the captured territories proved to be difficult, and Jerusalem fell to the Turks in 1244. By 1291, the Mediterranean island kingdom of Cyprus was the sole Crusader outpost in the region.

English instruction part of rebuilding Mozambique

CHIBUTO, Mozambique—Prompted by their teenage American teacher, the school children's chorus starts: "A, B, C, D!" Singing is one of Thaddaeus May's techniques for teaching English in the local Presbyterian church, a one-room building with reed walls and a tin roof.

May, from Overland Park, Kan., is in Mozambique with Mennonite Central Committee's one-year young adult program, Serving and Learning Together (SALT).

May's teaching goals are modest; he is not expecting his students in this former Portuguese colony to become fluent in English. Rather, May says, "I want to give them a foundation for when they study English in secondary school."

Learning English is important because it is "the language of commerce and communication," says Pastor Chiviti, the congregation's interim leader. "People are at a disadvantage if they can't speak it."

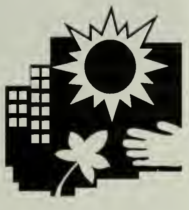
Mozambique is surrounded by English-speaking countries, including South Africa, where many Mozambicans go to find work.

The local Presbyterian congregation asked May to give English lessons. After two decades of civil war, Mozambicans see education as one way to improve their future. The country has been at peace since an accord was signed in 1993. But the war left Mozambique one of the world's most impoverished countries. Many people lack adequate food, health care and even clean water to drink.

"This is a poor country, and people have lots of hardships," May says. "Unlike in the West, people here have to live by faith every day as they try to obtain the basics for life."

Like most SALT participants, he lives with a local family. "The community admires this foreigner for living like them," Chiviti says, "for the love he demonstrates by living among them."—*MCC News Service*

Environmental group names design winners



vision
HEALING & HOPE FOR GOD'S CREATION

The Mennonite Environmental Task Force couldn't make up its mind. Instead of choosing one, it has announced four winners out of 21 entries in its design contest.

"We couldn't pick just one because they all seemed so equally good," says Doug Krehbiel, Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) director for peace and justice resources, who works with the task force.

The task force, supported by CHM and Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, promotes awareness and concern for God's creation. Mennonite artists and designers were invited to submit work with the theme "Vision: Healing and Hope for God's Creation."

Winning entries were (top to bottom) Paula Johnson of Scottdale, Pa.; Merrill Miller of Scottdale; Josh Finley of Emporia, Kan.; and Beth R. Boehr of Bluffton, Ohio.

Johnson's design will be used on the Mennonite Environmental Task Force's letterhead. Miller's design may be used on a banner or the cover of a curriculum piece. Finley's design will be made into a T-shirt, and Boehr's will probably appear on a bulletin cover or insert.

—GCMC News Service

Goshen history professor, journal editor dies at 73

GOSHEN, Ind.—John S. Oyer, longtime history professor at Goshen (Ind.) College and for 25 years editor of *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* died May 4 in Goshen after an extended illness. He was 73.

Oyer was a Goshen faculty member from 1955 to 1993. A 1951 Goshen graduate, he received his master's degree from Harvard University in 1951 and his doctoral degree from the University of Chicago in 1960. Oyer edited *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* a scholarly journal of Mennonite history and life, from 1966 to 1974 and from 1976 to 1992. He also served as director of Goshen's Mennonite Historical Library for 12 years.

Among Oyer's retirement activities was promoting a traveling exhibit of 23 original printing plates for a 17th-century edition of *Martyr's Mirror.* He also coauthored a book on the subject.—*Rachel Lapp*

GOSHEN, Ind.—Jep Hostetler has been making people laugh for six years. And he did it again May 3-4 in two presentations at Greencroft, a Mennonite-affiliated retirement community.

"It is time for all Christians to consider the joy of laughter, festivity, celebration and outright mirth," Hostetler said.

Humor studies, he said, show that laughter increases endorphins and enkephalins, resulting in lower blood pressure, increased muscle flexion and increased natural killer cells. Hostetler noted that children laugh 400 times a day, while adults laugh only 15.

"Think bigger than laughter," he said. "We can help our elders age with more joy and more humor."

Hostetler, a physician, leads presentations and workshops on humor and health. He and his wife, Joyce, serve half time as staff for the Mennonite Medical Association.

Make room for the Spirit

Glen Guyton, with the help of his wife, pastor and other Mennonites, leaves the military to follow the Spirit's leading.

by Rich Preheim

Photo courtesy of Glen Guyton

Family affair: Glen and Cyndi Guyton with their daughter, Andre-a, who is 6 months old.

Glen Guyton was just following his girlfriend. Then he was just following his wife. But in doing so, he now sees, he was following God's leading—from being a captain in the U.S. Air Force to becoming a conscientious objector (CO) working for the church.

"I do really believe that God puts husband and wife together," Glen says. "She was the wife I needed for what God is calling me to do."

But this is not just another story about the unexpected results of faithfulness. This story cuts to the heart of the core Mennonite tenet of pacifism. What can happen when a congregation of a historic peace church welcomes as members individuals who are also members of the military? Good things, as Glen's story shows.

Glen was a recent graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and had just been assigned in the summer of 1993 to Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Va., when he met Cyndi, a staff sergeant. They started dating, and she invited him to Calvary Community Church, a large, predominantly African-American Mennonite congregation in Hampton. Glen, who was raised Presbyterian and had never heard of Mennonites before, went with her.

Calvary has many members who are in the military, which has put the congregation in tension with much of the rest of the Mennonite church. But Calvary sees the military installations of Virginia's Tidewater region as its mission field. Many military personnel, particularly people of color, have joined the armed forces, not necessarily to fight for their country but because they often lack access to other educational and vocational opportunities. "We must be open to the inclusion of people who are Christian … and have had to go into the military and still love the Lord," says Leslie Francisco III, Calvary's lead pastor.

Glen liked the congregation and became a member in the fall of 1993. While Calvary does not make pacifism a pressing issue—"First and foremost, [Leslie] worries about salvation," Glen says—he heard about the Mennonite peace stance and was offended. "You can't be a Christian and be part of the military," Glen says he heard from Mennonites outside the congregation.

"I said, Hey, these [16th-century Anabaptists] are some pretty good guys. They weren't cowards; they were kind of revolutionaries."

—Glen Guyton

But encouraged by the ministries and growth at Calvary, Glen became actively involved in the congregation, serving as a youth leader and going on a mission trip to Ghana. All the while, Glen and Leslie periodically discussed the church's peace position.

Different points of view: Then in November 1996, Glen accompanied several members of the Calvary pastoral staff to Chicago for a consultation called by the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church to address Mennonite church members in the military. That, says Glen, is where his journey to conscientious objection began. "I really got to hear different points of view," he says. "I got a deeper understanding on where everyone was coming from on understandings of peace and justice."

Glen decided he would not re-enlist when his military commitment was up in the summer of 1998.

Titus Peachey, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. staff member for peace education, talked with Glen at the Chicago consultation and on several occasions during his journey to conscientious objection. "[Glen's] commitment to God and to church and to following Christ is very strong, and when he perceives something is in the way of carrying that out, he removes it," Titus says. "He began to see the military more and more getting in the way of that."

In January 1997, Cyndi (whom Glen married in 1995) went to MCC headquarters in

Akron, Pa., for an orientation session. She was going to work at Calvary's elementary school under an MCC internship program. Glen went along for a few days and while there sat in on a few of the orientation sessions. One made him willing to be identified with Mennonites and clinched his decision to leave the military. Titus presented a session on Anabaptist history, including early stories of persecution and martyrdom.

"I said, Hey, these are some pretty good guys. They weren't cowards; they were kind of revolutionaries," Glen says. "They may not be using physical violence, but they were willing to fight for what they believed in."

But the decision to leave the Air Force as a conscientious objector did not come until that spring. Glen previously had been content to wait out his five-year commitment. But then he caught wind of a rumor that he would be sent overseas, which could add another two years to his service. At the same time he was feeling more and more a call to youth work. Besides, he and Cyndi were expecting their first child.

He decided in April 1997 to file as a CO. Glen's application was denied due to paperwork snafus, he says, and he reapplied in June. This time he was granted CO status. Glen left the Air Force on Feb. 5. In the meantime, he had served six months in Iceland, and he and Cyndi became parents of a girl, Andre-a.

Penalty: But his leaving the service early came with a price. Service academy graduates are required to serve a term in the military in exchange for their education, and not fulfilling that term comes with a penalty. For Glen, that penalty was $6,000 plus interest. He still owes $3,200. Glen now works with Mennonite Mutual Aid, and on May 1 he began as a quarter-time youth pastor at Calvary. But he is still making some $1,500 a month less than when he was in the Air Force. Virginia Conference has helped with a $2,000 contribution.

But the financial loss is a price Glen is willing to pay. "It was worthwhile because God proved … faithful," he says. "If money was my focus, I would have stayed in the military. I got out for the ministry."

Glen has a burden for youth, and he says he has something to offer as a result of his military experience. "I encourage them to do other things," he says. "I don't tell them what to do, but I want to give them information."

For Glen, the issues are more than "Thou shall not kill." The sexism and party atmosphere of military life are particularly disturbing to him. "There are many Christian people, many good people in the military," he says. "As a whole, I don't think the lifestyle is as suitable as it could be for Christians."

Glen says he entered the U.S. Air Force Academy for the affordable education. But since then, he has worked with a committee from Virginia Conference's Warwick District on educational and vocational alternatives to military service, and he has shared his views at the Mennonite Church convention in Orlando, Fla., last summer and in an upcoming video from MCC.

But none of this probably would have happened had Glen not met Cyndi—and if military membership had been an impediment to joining Calvary. Glen and Leslie say it is important to make room for the Spirit to move. "For someone to force their interpretation on how Christ wants us to live is inappropriate," Glen says.

"As we preach and teach a holistic gospel," Leslie says, "it will usher people … into the type of lifestyle we would want to live as Christians. It's allowing God to … work rather than letting church legislation do the work of Christ."

Rich Preheim is the associate editor for news of The Mennonite.

> "As we preach and teach a holistic gospel, it will usher people … into the type of lifestyle we would want to live as Christians. It's allowing God to … work rather than letting church legislation do the work of Christ."
>
> —*Leslie Francisco III*

'Wonderful evangelists'

Love brought Michael Chandler to the peace position. Not love of God. Love of a woman. Michael had just returned from a tour of duty in Vietnam with the U.S. Navy when friends set him up on a blind date in early 1975. But his date couldn't make it, so her roommate, Linda Bartels, took her place.

"As the dating became more and more serious, I was interested in gaining brownie points with Linda and her family," Michael says.

Despite being "antagonistic" to Christianity, he went with Linda to her congregation, Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.). And what he heard, saw and felt, Michael says, "penetrated my heart and changed my life."

Michael is now pastor at Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster (Pa.), and has been married to Linda for more than 22 years. In his previous pastorate, at Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church, Michael counseled a man whose story was similar to his.

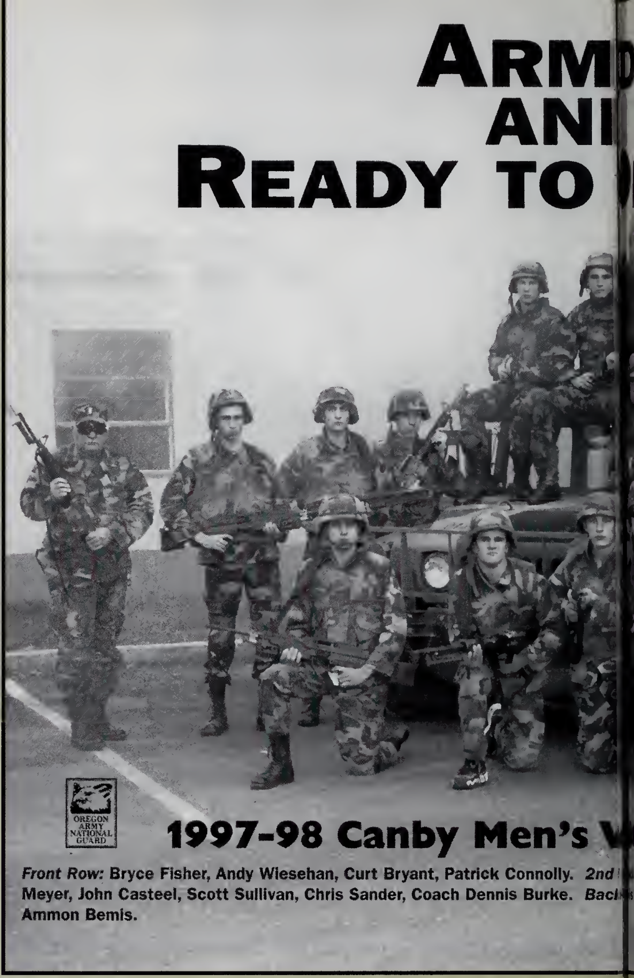
Bill Cole was in the Air Force and dating Marla Lantz, whom he met on a blind date. He was raised Catholic and she was Mennonite. He went to church with her. "I felt this was a better way to get to know Marla," he says.

And like Michael, going to church with his girlfriend changed Bill's life. He had growing concerns about killing, and the Mennonite peace stance gave him a needed religious framework. Bill got out of the Air Force in January, a year after he applied as a conscientious objector.

Bill and Marla (who is *The Mennonite*'s marketing director) were married last August and live in Belen, N.M.

Michael notes other Mennonites who came to the church and to pacifism through their wives. "There are lots out there; it's uncanny," he says. "These Mennonite women are wonderful evangelists."—*Rich Preheim*

A Mennonite congregation in Oregon speaks out when the local high school basketball team is pictured in military outfits and shown holding machine guns.



Front Row: Bryce Fisher, Andy Wiesehan, Curt Bryant, Patrick Connolly. *2nd*
Meyer, John Casteel, Scott Sullivan, Chris Sander, Coach Dennis Burke. *Bac*
Ammon Bemis.

No minor thing

by Cynthia Hockman-Chupp

The 17 young men, dressed in camouflage fatigues, crouch around a humvee, their eyes shaded, machine guns in their hands.

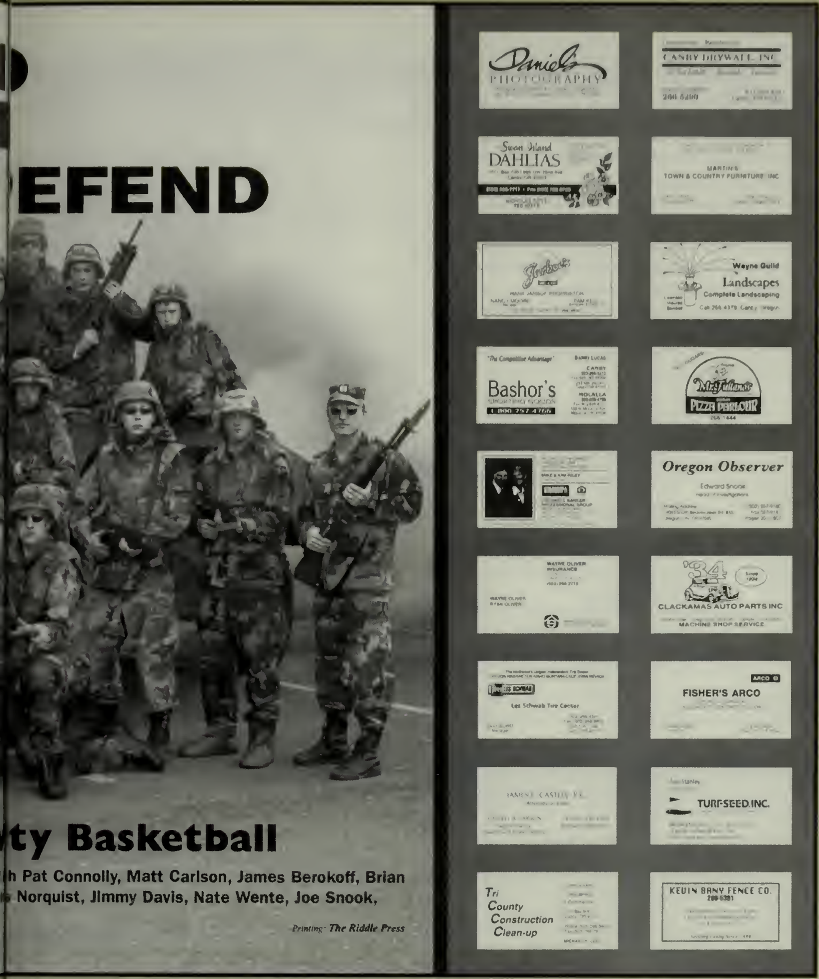
The poster (above) looks like an ad for the U.S. Army, but it pictures the players and coaches of the 1997-98 Canby (Ore.) High School varsity basketball team. The boys are "defending" their league basketball title. The picture was taken at an Oregon Army National Guard facility, and the humvee, guns and fatigues are owned by the Guard.

What would you or your congregation do if your local high school used a poster like this to promote its team? Members of Pacific Covenant Mennonite Church in Canby learned of the poster too late to stop its distribution, but their actions led to teachable moments for Mennonites to talk with each other and with neighbors about nonviolence.

Pacific Covenant member Carolyn Yoder first saw the poster (which did not include anyone from a Mennonite congregation) in early February when a friend from the community showed it to her along with a letter of concern to the Canby school board. Carolyn and other community members signed the letter.

As a result of the letter, superintendent Stephen Miller met with 10 people, who said they felt understood. But at the next school board meeting Miller recommended that the poster not be removed.

Church member Ray Smucker called the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Kevin Barny Fence Co.

Photo courtesy of Cynthia Hockman-Chupp

high school principal and athletic director but did not feel listened to. "The issue was over as far as the school was concerned," Ray says. He asked his office partner, a member of the National Guard, if he was making too much of this. "He didn't think so," Ray says.

Propaganda: Various media picked up the story. Students and others defended the poster with comments like, "What's the big deal?" One newspaper editorial called the objections a "thought-police action that is directed at a perfectly harmless bit of high school propaganda." And the photo, the editorial said, was "patriotic."

Jon Yoder, pastor at Pacific Covenant and a Canby High graduate, agreed to serve as a spokesperson for those opposing the poster.

"We don't allow our children to bring pocketknives to school, yet we walk them down to the National Guard office and put a machine gun in their hands," Jon said on television.

Many Canby students supported the poster. Students wore camouflage clothing to the next basketball game. Nathan Gingerich, a sophomore at Canby and a Pacific Covenant attender, heard students call the people in opposition "jerks."

One Sunday, Jon spoke about the situation. People talked and prayed for those publicly involved. Ray Smucker says, "One thing we learn from this is that we are a body of believers that support one another. When one is out on a limb, we support him."

continued on page 14

> "We don't allow our children to bring pocketknives to school, yet we walk them down to the National Guard office and put a machine gun in their hands."
>
> —*Jon Yoder*

Ray thought about his conservative Mennonite background. "I was glad when Mom cut her hair and Dad started wearing a tie because I wasn't different anymore," he says. "But I'm not like everybody else. I'm different from mainstream Christianity."

Pacific Covenant Church members see this as an opportunity for consciousness-raising, Jon says. "We are called to speak to a culture that is comfortable with this poster." It's a culture, he says, without hope—a culture that puts its faith in military solutions.

Past generations have had to wrestle with questions of how to respond to the U.S. military, but "our young people haven't," Jon says. "I'm afraid we've become soft."

Mennonites, along with the wider culture, he says, have become more comfortable with video violence. "This situation has made me more conscious of the toys my kids play with and the movies we let them watch.

"We are failing our youth if we don't talk about issues of nonviolence," Jon says. "We cannot suppress discussions about peace and nonviolence just because we've become comfortable in our society."

Jon encouraged church members to call and voice their concerns to the high school principal. Rather than seeing this as a campaign to discredit administrative decisions, the congregation sees this as an opportunity to educate their neighbors in the community.

Although discussion continued into March, the controversy quieted as basketball season ended. All the posters were sold.

For the young people at Pacific Covenant this has been a learning experience. "Our kids see us saying this isn't right and being a minority and taking flack," Jon says. "They see that this is what is involved in following Jesus." He says we need to broaden this issue to include other situations in which Christian youth are in a minority, like avoiding premarital sex or drugs. "Following Jesus requires us to follow a narrow path that may make us hated."

"I feel aghast at how people think this is no big deal. It's good to see people standing up for what they believe in." *—Karie Smucker, 13*

Ray Smucker's 13-year-old daughter Karie agrees with her dad and other congregation members that this poster is no minor thing. "I feel aghast at how people think this is no big deal," she says. "It's good to see people standing up for what they believe in."

Cynthia Hockman-Chupp lives in Canby, Ore.

Excerpts from a letter to the *Canby* (Ore.) *Herald*:

"There may be those among us who know the family of the police officer who was recently killed with an assault rifle, and the sight of that weapon carried by kids makes us sick to our stomachs. There are also those among us, of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds, who see our community highly sensitized to issues like weapons in school, the increase of random acts of violence and the glorification of weapons of destruction, and when we see the basketball poster something jumps out at us: What is wrong with this picture?

"Is it the association of athletics with military action? The association of military gear and weapons with 'fun'? …

"For many of us it is difficult to let these associations pass without comment. We are concerned that our community is becoming more and more comfortable with images of young people in battle fatigues carrying weapons. We are compelled to raise our voice and let the community know that there are many who do find the associations appalling and an attitude of 'what's the big deal?' a cause for deep reflection and prayer."

—Jon M. Yoder, pastor; Lynn Olson, associate pastor; John M. Miller, elder; Steven Ediger, elder; Pacific Covenant Mennonite Church, Canby

Awareness-raising opportunity

The Canby, Ore., school district includes two other Mennonite congregations: Zion Mennonite Church in Hubbard, and Calvary Mennonite Church in Aurora. These two congregations did not lend their voices in active opposition to the poster, but there were those in both who were sympathetic to the cause.

Zion has some dozen students in Canby High School and another dozen employees of the school district. "We're very involved with those schools," says Zion pastor Richard Regier.

While not de-emphasizing the peace position, he says, Zion has been working at building up a congregation that had been experiencing a painful time. The congregation's focus has simply been elsewhere. "We've put so much energy into how we are going to exist … that we haven't looked at some of the larger world issues," Richard says. He says he made one "oblique reference" to the poster controversy in one sermon.

At Calvary, pastor Palmer Becker says, "There were some who were wondering why it was an issue."

For Zion and Calvary, military-related issues have historically been contentious. Former Zion members helped start Calvary after World War II, in part as a congregation for Mennonites who had served in the armed forces, which has left a legacy to this day. "We kind of have an agreement that we won't talk about this issue because it hurts people one way or another," says Palmer, who wrote a letter of concern to the Canby principal and coaches.

The poster controversy has died down. In the end, there is no enmity among the three congregations, and it turned out to be the awareness-raising opportunity poster opponents hoped for. The school has instituted procedures to screen for offensive promotional materials. And area Mennonites have had their consciousness pricked regarding the military and violence. Says Richard, "It definitely raised an issue we will revisit." *—Rich Preheim, associate editor of* The Mennonite

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Crandall will share practical ideas from an extensive study project of churches in 50 denominations.

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For program information, contact Diane Zaerr, 219 296-6222, dzaerr@ambs.edu

For registration or lodging information, contact Bev Sawatzky, 219 296-6207, bsawatzky@ambs.edu

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Beginnings
a tM series

God's amazing grace

Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) teaches four important aspects of grace that can help us in our Christian life.

by J. Daryl Byler

Grace is not only God's unmerited favor but also God's active power at work in our lives.

This spring, Duke University students erected tents outside the athletic coliseum in order to be first in line for limited tickets for an upcoming basketball rivalry. Most of us like to be first in line, but at Duke many students got in line six weeks before the tickets went on sale.

Imagine the students' surprise and anger if others who waited until the day of ticket sales had been escorted to the front of the line. Yet this is the dynamic in the parable of the workers in the vineyard(Matthew 20:1-16, see below).

Jesus' parable is about grace. Grace comes from the Greek "charis," or gift. Grace is not only God's unmerited favor but also God's active power at work in our lives.

- Grace is the divine influence upon the heart—God's character poured into our lives so we can live as faithful disciples. Grace helps us do such difficult things as serve one another and love our enemies.

> For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be first, and the first will be last.
>
> —*Matthew 20:1-16*

- Grace is like the electrical current that makes light bulbs light, or the helium that makes balloons float, or the wind that makes boats sail.
- Grace is the transforming reality of God's power.

The parable of the workers in the vineyard reminds us of four important aspects of grace.

1. God's to give: Grace is rooted in God's generous character. Dozens of biblical texts remind us that God is gracious and merciful.

We all long for God's favor, yet we understand so little of God's grace because we live in a culture that operates with a currency of earning, deserving and merit.

Our world demands that we make the grade, excel, be successful and prove our worth. We are measured by standards such as being bigger, better, faster, stronger, smarter or more savvy than the next person.

In such a culture we are tempted to gauge our value by what we do, how much we earn, how much we know or how hard we work. But all these factors focus on us. Grace always points us to God.

Of course it is important to give our best effort—like all the workers in Jesus' story. But the currency of God's kingdom is grace. And grace is God's to give, not ours to earn.

2. Enough for all: In Jesus' day, hired laborers were the lowest class of workers. They lived a day-to-day, hand-to-mouth existence. Even slaves and servants were less vulnerable because they were attached to families.

In Jesus' story, all the laborers were well aware of their need for daily provisions. All were willing to work as they were given opportunity. The landowner's concern was not how long each had labored but that all would have enough to care for their daily needs.

In God's kingdom, there is not more grace

Grace has an equalizing effect in a world that thrives on pecking orders based on education levels, job titles and hours worked.

for some than others. But there is enough grace for all who are in need. Grace has an equalizing effect in a world that thrives on pecking orders based on education levels, job titles and hours worked.

3. Eyes of envy: God's grace is generous but can never be understood through eyes of envy. Envy blinds us to God's goodness.

In Jesus' story, no one was defrauded. Indeed, even the all-day workers received a generous day's wage. But instead of delighting in the provision for their daily needs, they became bitter because others, who had not worked as hard as they, received the same gift.

The same is true today. The *Washington Post* printed a story about a psychologist who works with a number of high-level Wall Street clients. She says her patients rarely feel good about the size of their bonuses, but they almost always feel bad about the size of those paid to other people.

How often do we miss the blessing of God's grace because we are too busy comparing ourselves with those we believe are less deserving? But that is precisely the point: None of us deserves God's grace.

4. Beginning with the last: The punch line in the parable is this: The last will be first, and the first will be last.

The last hired were first to understand the landowner's generosity. They knew that according to the prevailing wage standards they had gotten a great deal.

So, too, with God's grace. Those who seem least worthy to receive grace are often first to understand it. Perhaps this is why Jesus invites us to feed hungry enemies. It is at the points of greatest human vulnerability that God's grace is most likely to break through with clarity.

Jesus reminded the chief priests and elders that prostitutes and tax collectors would enter God's kingdom before the religious leaders (Matthew 21:31). Today Jesus might hold up undocumented immigrants, welfare moms and the homeless—people society looks down on—as those who will lead us on the path to understanding God's grace.

Until we understand God's grace, we are of little use in God's kingdom. For we will be envious, self-righteous, judgmental and disdainful. But as we experience God's grace, we become gentle channels of God's grace and blessing.

Daryl Byler is director of Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office.

Beginnings is a series of occasional articles that reflect on selected biblical passages where the word "beginning" occurs.

In late January, several nights before his untimely death at age 43, Spencer Perkins preached to some 300 college students in Jackson, Miss.: "What's so amazing about grace is that God forgives us and embraces us with open arms even though we don't deserve it. What's new about grace, at least for me, is that because we are grateful for what God did for us, we allow [God] to do the same to others through us. This means that if I know this loving God who is so full of grace, then I will forgive and embrace those who, like me, don't deserve my grace and forgiveness."

—J. Daryl Byler

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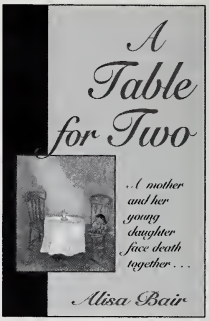

A Table for Two by Alisa Bair

The mysteries of life and faith underlie this true story of a family losing its youngest member to cancer. As bewildering is the child's extraordinary perception and her character, which takes on shining power as her body loses strength.

The book includes Kelly's diary entries, her Christian family's efforts to live as normally as possible, and, through it all, her mother's persistent hope, faith, and love. Vividly written.

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"There is little solace." —Alisa Bair

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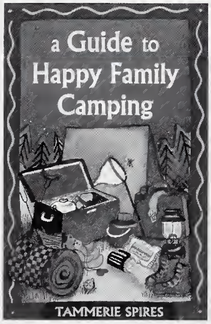

A Guide to Happy Family Camping
by Tammerie Spires

There's more to going camping than gathering the gear. Or plotting your route or reserving your campsite.

Veteran camper Tammerie Spires began her forays into the out-of-doors as an eight-year-old, continued as a teen and young adult, and is still at it with her husband and their two children.

If you want to camp but don't know how to start, Spires lays out the plan in bite-sized steps. What to do when you get "there," what to eat, when and where to sleep, and who does what—Spires covers it all as a buoyant, yet experienced, friend.

She wraps it all up with an exhaustive directory of Lists to make (Planning, Packing, and Preparing), of magazines and websites to consult, and of U.S. Parks and Wildlife Departments to visit and contact, as well as Canadian National Parks.

Spires is an active member of Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas.

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1. Camping happily requires determining what you need to camp happily.
2. Make and use lists.
3. Everything should be fun . . . make it so.
4. The more situations you are prepared for, the more you are prepared to enjoy.
5. Everybody over two years of age packs her own stuff.
6. Sleep is an important prerequisite to having fun on a camping trip. Make sure the kids and the adults get plenty.

—Tammerie Spires

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MEDA program to benefit California immigrants

FRESNO, Calif.—To help alleviate the pressing need for jobs among immigrants and refugees in the area, Mennonite Economic Development Associates has helped launch a microenterprise project in Fresno. DREAM, or Developing Resources for Employment and Microenterprise, will teach not only business skills to prospective entrepreneurs but also English. Many business terms do not translate well into Southeast Asian languages. In the past 15 years, 70,000 Southeast Asian refugees have flocked to the area, plus smaller numbers of Slavs and Ethiopians. The unemployment rate among refugees is 65 percent.—*MEDA News Service*

EMU teams score high in math contest

HARRISONBURG, Va.—For the third consecutive year, Eastern Mennonite University students have been cited for their efforts in an international math competition. Teams from several hundred schools around the world entered the annual Mathematical Contest in Modeling earlier this year.

The EMU team of Daniel Showalter, sophomore from West Liberty, Ohio; Dave Rush, junior from Quakertown, Pa.; and Wossen Yemane, senior from Ethiopia, received a meritorious award for placing in the top 15 percent. The team of Nick Russ, freshman from Dillsburg, Pa.; Ryan W. Kauffman, senior from Lancaster, Pa.; and Stephanie Horst, senior from Harrisonburg, Va., was named honorable mention for ranking in the top 40 percent.

Book to be translated into 16th language

SCOTTDALE, Pa.—Herald Press has sold Norwegian rights for its book *Seven Things Children Need* by John M. Drescher, Herald Press' most translated volume. With the Norwegian edition, the book will be available in 16 languages in 18 countries. There are English editions in both England and India.

Bluffton board OKs academic center

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Facing an 86 percent growth in enrollment in the last 10 years, the Bluffton College board has authorized the construction of a $7.5-million academic center. The facility will include classrooms, media and computer centers and other instruction space. Construction should start in February and be completed by the summer of 2000.

Sermon on the Mount topic of world consultation

GENEVA—Four Mennonites participated in a February consultation of Reformation denominations on the Sermon on the Mount. The meeting, held at a Geneva retreat center, was attended by Thomas Finger, professor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; Larry Miller, Mennonite World Conference executive secretary; Walter Sawatzky, professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.; and Gabriele Harder, a German pastor.

The consultation was the fifth in a series dating back to 1986. Participants included representatives of "First Reformation" denominations—Waldensians, Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Moravian Brethren and the Hussite Church—and Radical Reformation denominations—Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, Hutterian Brethren/Bruderhof and Quakers. The consultation was sponsored by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Lutheran World Federation.—*MWC News Service*

Matt Krehbiel

Write on for human rights

Ruth Harder, a freshman at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., uses a folding chair as a desk in the school library to write a letter against human rights abuses during an April 15 write-a-thon sponsored by the local Amnesty International chapter. Harder, from Hillsboro, Kan., was one of 60 people who wrote more than 200 letters on behalf of prisoners of conscience in China, Indonesia, Nigeria and Vietnam.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Bluffton (Ohio) College will each honor two graduates at campus celebrations on May 23.

Bethel will present its Distinguished Achievement Award to Erwin Boschmann, class of 1963, a chemistry professor and dean at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Donald Goering, class of 1952, will receive the Outstanding Alumnus Award. A physician and professor from Lenexa, Kan., he was the American Academy of Family Physicians 1997 family physician of the year.

Bluffton will give its outstanding alumni awards to Lois Neiswander Rodabaugh of Bluffton and Joanne Miller Sauder of Grabill, Ind. Rodabaugh, class of 1939, has served the college as director of health services, professor of early childhood education and dean of students. Sauder, class of 1952, is a guidance counselor and social worker and has served on the boards of Mennonite Central Committee and the Evangelical Mennonite Church.

Correction: Bill Stucky was misidentified in a story about centenarian cattle walker Jake Daum in the May 12 *The Mennonite*. Stucky is Daum's brother-in-law.

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Events

Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, Ont., 50th anniversary celebration, June 27-28. Contact: 519-293-3314.

Western District Conference and South Central Conference joint annual meetings, July 3-5, Tulsa, Okla.

Northwest Conference annual meeting, July 9-12, Olds, Alta.

Virginia Conference annual meeting, July 15-18, Williamsburg, Va.

Indiana-Michigan Conference annual meeting, July 23-25, Emma, Ind.

Births

Alger, Eric Nelson, April 1, to Jon and Melanie (Sommers) Alger, Orrville, Ohio.

Bauman, Ryan Dillon, March 7, to Sheila (Forler) and Steve Bauman, Elmira, Ont.

Beachy, Allegra Annette, April 12, to John and Kathy (Sneary) Beachy, Kokomo, Ind.

Boyer, Tristan Sweigart, April 18, to Rebecca (Sweigart) and William Boyer, Lancaster, Pa.

Dyck, Rylie Mystika, April 3, to Julie (Zinn) and Ryan Dyck, Moundridge, Kan.

Eberly, McKenzie Rae, April 2, to Chad and Kathy (Nussbaum) Eberly, East Earl, Pa.

Euen, Ashley Kate, April 22, to Rob and Tracy (Gindlesperger) Euen, Johnstown, Pa.

Fecondo, Sarah Lynn, April 15, to James and Lisa (Fisher) Fecondo, Quakertown, Pa.

Fleeman, Hannah Jasmine, April 16, to Elvia (Fregaso) and Jeff Fleeman, Lincoln, Ill.

Good, Megan Laurel, April 3, to Lee and Rosemary Good, Lititz, Pa.

Griffin, Adam Jeffrey, April 11, to George and Veronica (Bostion) Griffin, Holsopple, Pa.

Harder, Joseph Aaron, April 22, to Philip and Wanda (Bowman) Harder, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hartzler, Josiah Timothy, Feb. 17, to Carla (Tinsler) and Tim Hartzler, Orrville, Ohio.

Helmuth, Rachelle Ann, April 19, to Lisa (Mullett) and Todd Helmuth, Sarasota, Fla.

Hoover, Brianna Rose, April 20, to Dia (Kemp) and Rodney Hoover, Bethel, Alaska.

Hostetler, Anna Mertice, March 11, to Deb and Doyle Hostetler, Pleasant Dale, Neb.

Howard, Maverick Colt, April 14, to Krista (Funk) and Ron Howard, Reedley, Calif.

King, Evan Lee, April 18, to Natalie (Rupp) and Phillip King, Pettisville, Ohio.

Mast, Logan Scott, April 16, to Jeni (Nussbaum) and Wendell Mast, Dundee, Ohio.

Myers, Lorien Deane, April 13, to Gary and Joleen (Miller) Myers, Harrisonburg, Va.

Nines, Orion Mark, April 12, to Mark and Susan (Deneen) Nines, Martinsburg, Pa.

Pettit, Lauren Marie, April 6, to Linda (Loflin) and Phil Pettit, Westminster, Colo.

Reinhardt, Alexander Brent, April 20, to Brent and Marla (Gerber) Reinhardt, Wakarusa, Ind.

Simmons, Shawnarik, April 11, to Mary (Martin) and Shawn Simmons, Gainesville, Fla.

Stauffer, Aleah Beth, Feb. 26, to David and Shannon (Warfield) Stauffer, Orrville, Ohio.

Stoltzfus, Audrey Ann, April 9, to Dwight and Peggy (Hurley) Stoltzfus, Gap, Pa.

Tesfay, Abigail Alene, April 22, to Alene and Beth Tesfay, Manheim, Pa.

Thulin, Kyle Jacob, April 12, to Tara (Miller) and Ted Thulin, Boulder, Colo.

Voort, Hayley Jeanne, Feb. 11, to Alan and Janine (Kemp) Voort, Stratford, Ont.

Waters, Kara Elizabeth, April 9, to Dave and Mindy (Haynes) Waters, Johnstown, Pa.

Marriages

Barnes/Kurtz: Vincent Barnes, Reading, Pa., and Joan Kurtz, Reading, April 11, by Urbane Peachey.

Bauman/Landes: Steven Bauman, Telford, Pa., and Andrea Landes, Sellersville, Pa., April 25, by James Longacre and Larry Moyer.

Current/High: Eric Current, Reinholds, Pa., and Kelly High, Ephrata, Pa., April 18, by Douglas Kaufman.

Hedrick/McCauley: Tiffany Hedrick, Lansdale, Pa., and Matthew McCauley, Pittsburgh, April 18, by Gary Stenson.

Mach/Roth: Brad Mach, Lincoln, Neb., and Shani Roth, Lincoln, April 18, by Robert Troyer.

Matthews/Willems: Julie Matthews, Salina, Kan., and Matthew Willems, Hutchinson, Kan., April 18, by Howard Wagler and Charles Aase.

Rediger/Woita: Olivia Rediger, Milford, Neb., and Garry Woita, Milford, April 4, by Robert Troyer.

Stafford/Troyer: Anne Stafford, Indianapolis, and Bronson Troyer, Indianapolis, April 4, by Ryan Ahlgrim.

Deaths

Aeschliman, Ora C., 74, Archbold, Ohio, died April 9. Survivors: children Mike, Jane Konold, Jan Roth; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: April 13 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Dee Swartz and Ron Guengerich.

Bachman, Mattie, 95, Eureka, Ill., died April 14. Survivors: children Russel, Ruth Gross, Minerva Reeb, Orpha Schertz; stepchildren Eileen Schertz, Richard, John Jr., Paul, Allan; 11 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren; 22 stepgrandchildren; 47 step-great-grandchildren; seven step-great-great-grandchildren. Burial: April 17 at Eureka by Robert Nolt.

Bontrager, Viola Albrecht, 92, Sarasota, Fla., died April 14. Survivors: husband, Chris; children Jean Bender, G. Edwin, Dennis; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Burial: April 17 at Sarasota by Barry Loop.

Cressman, Ruth Brubacher, 70, Cambridge, Ont., died Feb. 22. Survivors: husband, Willis; children Del, Weyburn, Don, John; six grandchildren. Burial: Feb. 25 at Bloomingdale, Ont., by Fred Lichti, Amzie Brubacher and Phyllis Tribby.

Dietzel, Mary Bechler, 82, Sarasota, Fla., died April 10. Survivors: son, Daniel; two grandchildren. Burial: April 17 at Lancaster, Pa., by LeRoy Bechler.

Eash, Raymond H., 84, Sarasota, Fla., died March 26 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Amanda; children Ernie, Earlin, Bonnie Roderick; stepchildren Mary Jane Raber, Dorothy Schrock, Ronnie Yoder; 10 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; 10 stepgrandchildren. Burial: March 30 at Middlebury, Ind., by Sam Troyer and Henry Schrock Jr.

Godshall, Karl W., 44, Charlottesville, Va., died March 30 of heart failure. Survivors: wife, Betty; children Amy, Timothy; parents, Ernest and Martha Godshall. Burial: April 2 at Hampton, Va., by Karl Bowden.

Hefner, Vietta Nafziger, 81, Hopedale, Ill., died March 27. Survivor: husband, Joseph. Burial: April 1 at Hopedale by James Smith and Michael Knowles.

Hook, Esther Margaretha Holrichter, 87, Hesston, Kan., died April 19. Survivors: child, Arlis; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: April 22 at Hesston by Cheryl Hershberger and Mary Dyck.

Keener, Lydia Fannie, 75, Hagerstown, Md., died April 16 of cancer. Burial: April 20 at Hagerstown by Emanuel Martin and Nelson Martin.

Kling, Elsie Marzolf, 100, Archbold, Ohio, died April 14 of congestive heart failure. Survivors: children Arlene Nelson, Marjorie Taylor, Harwood, Harold, Arith Brandeberry; 20 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren; 26 great-great grandchildren. Burial: April 18 at Wauseon, Ohio, by Randy Nafziger.

Reimer, Earl, 77, Reedley, Calif., died April 13. Survivors: wife, Dorothy; children, Paul, Carol; four grandchildren; 10 stepgrandchildren. Burial: April 20, at Reedley by Kenneth Seitz.

Sangrey, J. Clayton, 89, Lititz, Pa., died March 19. Survivors: children Evelyn Hess, Gladys Martin;11 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 22 at Lititz by Donald Good, Dennis Ernest and Robert Petersheim.

Smith, Eileen E. Ackerman, 78, Washington, Ill., died April 9. Survivors: children Janet Wind, Vernon, Elaine Row, Lonnie; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial April 14 at Washington by Verle Brubaker.

Stutzman, Chester, 78, Milford, Neb., died April 16. Survivors: wife, Dorthy; children Hope Calmer, Bret; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Burial: April 20 at Milford by Robert Troyer.

Troyer, Raymond J., 67, Middlebury, Ind., died March 12 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Elizabeth; children Melody Wegener, Jon, Tina Frye; stepchildren Linda Bontrager, Wilbur Mast, Susan Mast; nine grandchildren; five stepgrandchildren; mother, Catherine Troyer. Burial: March 15 at Middlebury by Linford Martin and Jeff Kauffman.

Wade, John, 72, Cleveland, died April 18. Survivors: wife, Clara; son, Bruce; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: April 23 at Cleveland by Robin Miller.

Weber, Joan, 46, Waterloo, Ont., died March 20 of cancer. Survivors: parents, George and Vera Weber. Burial: March 23 at Baden, Ont., by Glyn Jones.

Yoder, Henry M., 84, Kalona, Iowa, died April 17. Survivors: wife, Kathryn; children Eileen Gooch, Mary Grimm, Corrine Walker, Merle, Loran, Kent; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: April 20 at Kalona by Noah Helmuth and Jay Miiller.

Yoder, Mylin E., 64, Middlebury, Ind., died March 13 of pulmonary embolism. Survivors: wife, Marlene; children Yvonne Buller, Janelle Miller, Jeremy; two grandchildren. Burial March 17 at Topeka, Ind., by Linford Martin and Jeff Kauffman.

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Israel Bike Ride for Nazareth Hospital, Oct. 30-Nov. 8, 1998. Participants must raise a minimum of $3,800. Optional two-day extension available. Contact Nazareth Project, 12B S. 7th St., Akron, PA 17501; 717-859-1389; email NAZPROJ@redrose.net.

International Guest House: One-year voluntary service positions open in Washington, D.C., at the International Guest House, a bed and breakfast sponsored by the Allegheny Conference. Needed: one couple in September, one single at the end of May, one single at the end of August. Call 202-726-5808.

Lancaster Mennonite High School has openings in all grades for the 1998-99 school year. For an application, course catalog or dorm information, write to Lancaster Mennonite High School, 2176 Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, PA 17602; 717-299-0436.

Bethany Christian Schools (gr. 6-12, enrollment 285) invites applications for 1998-99 for teaching positions: ***7th and 8th grade science*** (primary responsibility in science, with assignments in secondary areas to complete full-time load), ***middle-school physical education and health*** (half-time; coaching competence and interest desirable), ***Spanish*** (grades 8-12, full-time). Applicants should hold, or be qualified to obtain, Indiana licensure in primary teaching area.

Please forward resume to Allan Dueck, principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499; 219-534-2567; fax 219-533-0150; email bethany@npcc.net.

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Sarasota Christian School (grades K-12; enrollment 460) is currently accepting applications for the 1998-99 school year for the following positions: ***athletic director, media center specialist,*** and ***teachers for kindergarten, Spanish (K-12) and middle school.***

To request an application, contact Jean Martin, K-8 principal, or Eugene Miller, administrator, Sarasota Christian School, 5415 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232; 941-371-6481.

New Danville Mennonite School has teacher openings for August 1998 in the following areas: ***third grade, home ec.*** (part-time, grades 7 and 8).

Contact Carl A. Hess, administrator, New Danville Mennonite School, 393 Long Lane, Lancaster, PA 17603; 717-872-2506.

Eastern Mennonite University needs ***athletic facility manager***: 10-month, 30 hrs/wk. H.S. diploma required. Provide facility management and contest management staffing. Application deadline June 1. Multiethnic people encouraged.

Contact EMU Human Resources Office, 540-432-4108; ebybj@emu.edu.

Landis Homes is seeking a ***vice president of resident services*** to assist the president and provide administrative support and guidance to various departments including health services. Qualifications include a college degree in health administration or related management field. Supervisory experience in long-term care preferred. Nursing Home Administrator license helpful.

Submit resume to Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-581-3936.

Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., seeks half-time ***youth pastor,*** beginning summer 1998. Responsibilities include relational, programming, administrative and larger church duties. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree, seminary studies preferred. Salary commensurate with MBCM guidelines.

Inquiries and requests for a copy of the job description should be directed to pastor Phil Kniss, 540-434-1604; email PVMChurch@aol.com. Resumes should be mailed to Park View Mennonite Church, attn. Sherrill Glanzer, 1600 Park Road, Harrisonburg VA 22802.

Portland Mennonite Church is seeking candidates for the position of ***associate/youth pastor.*** Interested people should contact Leroy Chupp, 5117 SE 33rd Place, Portland, OR 97202.

Indian Creek Foundation, Harleysville, Pa., a not-for-profit organization providing a full array of services to people with developmental disabilities in the Franconia Mennonite Conference area, 25 miles northeast of Philadelphia, is currently seeking a ***director for residential services.*** Responsibilities encompass respect for community and development of residential community services; understanding and experience with managed care as it relates to individual's need for connectedness; and medical and psychiatric supports of these individuals. Requirements: positive history of team leadership, financial acuity, working knowledge of Windows-based computer software, master's degree in related field, five or more years of leadership experience (in MR field preferred).

Please forward resume and salary requirements to Human Resources, Indian Creek Foundation, P.O. Box 225, Harleysville, PA 19438; fax 215-256-3018. EOE

Bluffton College seeks a ***director of degree completion program*** in organizational management. Ph.D. or MBA preferred; other master's degree considered. Administrative responsibilities will require a multi-talented individual to supervise the program's staff, design curricula, project and monitor budgets, promote innovative programs, ensure academic quality and student satisfaction, recruit faculty and students, and garner support from faculty, staff, students and administrators as well as from business, industry and community leaders. The director will provide leadership for the development of new markets and/or programs in keeping with the mission of Bluffton College. Some teaching is expected.

Bluffton College, an EO employer, welcomes applications from qualified individuals who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Send letter of interest, resume or vitae, three letters of reference and transcripts to Joetta H. Schlabach, special assistant to the dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Review of applications will begin June 1, 1998 and continue until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/staffvac.

Question #10:

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Mennonite Central Committee seeks ***farm manager,*** Ebensburg, Pa. A two-year, full-time volunteer assignment under the supervision of the Pennsylvania Relief Sale Board chair and the two elderly farmer-owners. Qualifications include commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Further qualifications include knowledge of and experience in farm work/operation, ability to work independently, interest in working closely with older people, patience and flexibility. Duties include haymaking, taking care of heifers, building repair and property maintenance.

If interested in a job description or application, please contact Prem Dick or Goldie Kuhns in the Human Resources department; 717-859-1151; email psd@mcc.org or gpk@mcc.org. For further details you may contact Allen Carr, Pennsylvania Relief Sale chair at 717-944-0293.

Classified advertising space is available in *The Mennonite* to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, with a minimum of $25. To place an ad, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

by Rich Preheim

Structure, mission and the American church

Does this sound familiar? "We can talk about organizational renewal all we want, but nothing significant will change unless there is such commitment to the mission that we will cast [out] anything that encumbers our fulfilling the mission."

That comment could have come from almost anyone involved with or affected by the General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church merger. Instead, it came from Robert Prosser, the head of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, yet another denomination looking at reinventing itself.

The church, which split from the Presbyterian Church in 1810, has nearly 800 congregations and more than 88,000 members, mostly across the South. Change and the future of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was the focus of this year's ministers' conference, reports *The Cumberland Presbyterian.*

One pastor, Terrel D. Maynard, saying the current structure is not working, proposes massive downsizing, placing more emphasis at the local and regional levels. Others question the viability of maintaining the denomination's current institutions, including its schools: Bethel College in McKenzie, Tenn., and Memphis (Tenn.) Theological Seminary.

United Methodists break ranks

As the issue of homosexuality threatens to create schisms in the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, it apparently already has in the United Methodist Church, according to *Christian Century.*

In a highly publicized church trial, Jimmy Creech, a United Methodist pastor in Lincoln, Neb., was acquitted in March of violating church rules when he performed a same-sex "covenant" ceremony. In the trial's wake, a group of 18 clergy and 25 laypeople last month asked to be allowed to separate from their regional body, the California-Nevada Annual Conference. "We are divided beyond reconciliation," the group says. "Our differences with a liberal conference are insolvable."

The group cites a host of differences it has with the church, but says the Creech trial brought them to a crisis.

In a separate but related development, three large United Methodist congregations in Atlanta have announced they will withhold their share of funds for denominational programs because of the Creech verdict and other concerns about "doctrinal integrity."

Lengthening the lines of accountability

The killers of four U.S. Catholic churchwomen in El Salvador in 1980 were acting on "orders from above," say two of the four Salvadoran soldiers imprisoned for the crime. The two, both serving 30-year prison terms, made the disclosure to a human rights group in March, says *National Catholic Reporter.*

But the soldiers also say they do not know who those superior officers were. The orders were relayed through their sergeant, who is incarcerated elsewhere and refused to talk with the human rights group. Observers have long contended that the slayings of nuns Ita Ford, Maura Clarke and Dorothy Kazel and missionary Jean Marie Donovan were authorized by official higher-ups.

The Salvadoran government was supported by the United States during the Central American country's civil war. The killings have not been linked back to the United States. But critics say governmental policies created a climate which allowed for the killers' actions. "They, in effect, had received a green light from Washington," says Robert White, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador at the time.

Australian apology

A group of Baptists in Australia has issued an apology for the church's role in the "injustice, the dispossession, the pain and the sorrow borne" by Australia's indigenous peoples. The apology was issued at a March 13 service at Syndal Baptist Church in the southeast Australian state of Victoria.

"Formerly, churches served as agents of the government's policy of assimilation and cultural genocide," organizer Lea Paulson says in *Baptist Peacemaker.* "Now the churches are taking the lead in the movement towards reconciliation."

The text of the apology includes, "We confess that our failure to see what we were doing denied our common humanity, degraded us all and was not Christian."

Birds, bees and bunnies

Author and professor Rustum Roy recalls when he and his wife, Della, 30 years ago wrote *Honest Sex,* a book to get Christians to examine the role of sexuality within their spiritual and cultural contexts. "Among mainstream Christians, the audience for which the book was intended, our ideas were almost totally ignored," Roy writes in *The Other Side.*

But, he says, *Playboy* gave a rave review.

Women are important in Christian evangelism as both recipients and messengers of the gospel, reports *Prism,* published by Evangelicals for Social Action. A recent survey of missionaries, mission executives and mission professors shows that 90 percent believe gender is significant in conversion to Christianity. For example:

- **Sixty percent of Hong Kong's 260,000 Christians are women.**
- **In one county of China, 83 percent of the Christians are women.**
- **In Korea, the gospel was first received by women because they were willing to read the Bible in the new, simplified Korean script. Men refused to read the Bible except in traditional Chinese characters.**
- **In the 50,000 prayer cells of one Korean church, only 3,000 of the leaders are men.**
- **In Russia, almost all of the Methodist lay leaders are well-educated women who turned to Methodism because there was no room for them in Baptist or Orthodox churches.**

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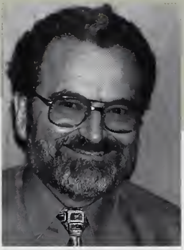
J. Lorne Peachey

How to win an argument

Remember Nicodemus, that leader of the Jewish religious community who sneaked off to see Jesus by night to find out what he was up to? From Nicodemus' first words in John 3, I gather that he had come to argue about truth. If so, he was surely in for a surprise. While Jesus presented his truth directly, he also did so humbly, without confrontation, softening his words by starting his sentences with "Very truly, I tell you" at least three times.

Apparently Jesus' style won over Nicodemus. The Bible doesn't tell us he became a disciple. But we do find him after the crucifixion helping Joseph of Arimathea take care of Jesus' body (John 19:38-42).

How different from the way we handle truth today. From headlines to advertisements, from political campaigns to books and TV talk shows, we shout at each other and put each other down as we try to buttress our side of what we believe.

That spirit has crept into the church. Some of my most embarrassing moments lately have come when someone, defending a truth I believe in deeply, did so with loud, raucous language, even sometimes with anger and rancor.

A biologist, Richard Lewontin, took on this ugly side of the church in *The New York Review of Books* (Oct. 23, 1997). It used to be that the church was seen as being on the side of the oppressed. Lewontin cites its support of the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement and resistance to the Vietnam War as examples.

To witness to absolute truth in relative times, we would do well to pay as much attention to the *how* as to the *what*.

By contrast, the "present movements of religious forces to intervene in issues of sex, family structure, reproductive behavior and abortion are of a different character," Lewontin says. "They are perceived by many people … not as liberatory but as restrictive, not as intervening on the side of the wretched of the earth but as themselves oppressive."

There are surely better ways to present truth. Glen Guyton's story in this issue (see page 10) is one of these. I remember Glen from the consultation on military and church membership called by the general boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church in November 1996. He was there to present the viewpoint of one both employed by the military and a member of a Mennonite congregation. Glen did so forcefully and articulately. But he also did so humbly, willing to listen to the other side. What he heard helped change his mind.

Mahatma Gandhi had a word for this approach to truth: *satyagraha*. Stand for what you believe to the best of your ability, but don't put your opponent down in the process. Hold to the truth but do so humbly and with respect for the one who disagrees with you. The goal is not defeat or victory but a new harmony.

That is the way Jesus approached Nicodemus. It was the way Jesus presented truth to almost everyone, especially the disenfranchised and the dispossessed. When Jesus did get angry, it was with the establishment, those who "knew" truth and presented it in obnoxious ways.

So what do we Mennonites do with the truths we believe in so deeply in these relative times? How do we, for example, articulate our beliefs about peace and nonviolence and still maintain relationships with those who believe otherwise? How do we defend what we believe in ways that do not violate our beliefs, either in the language we use or in the spirit we carry?

Editor Paul Schrag, writing in the April 23 issue of *Mennonite Weekly Review* points the way. "We can [share absolute truth] humbly," he writes. "We can express our beliefs without judging or stereotyping others. We can listen as well as talk. We can let our actions speak as loud as our words—but not neglect to preach what we practice."

If we would witness to absolute truth in relative times, we would do well to pay as much attention to the *how* as to the *what* in our discussions and our arguments. Leslie Francisco (page 11) puts it well. As we preach and teach a holistic gospel, we need to allow God's Spirit to work. For if truth is on our side, the Spirit will convict and lead to this truth. But by then, we will no longer have an argument.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

May 26, 1998

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a theology of singleness

4 Need above law for MCC Iraq assignment
5 Conference undecided about confession
8 One is a whole number
15 40 spoons of sugar per day

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Church planter shortage

I feel some sadness and alarm when I read articles such as "Plentiful Harvest but Few Workers" (*The Mennonite,* May 5). Recall with me the decades of the 1940s and '50s. Every spring and fall, weeklong revivals were common and churches were filled to overflowing. All manner of sins were confronted, confessed and forgiven. From that context we had no problem finding church planters. Many young families took their children, left the farm and parents behind and moved into remote areas, making lifelong commitments to the church. Congregations back home were directly involved and excited to stand with and support the mission effort.

Today, families no longer take their children for a visit to mission churches. Pastors have given up even weekend revivals for lack of attendance. No, God is not calling us back to the '50s, but he is showing us the way to himself. When we are willing to leave our sophistication and professionalism at the cross and follow the lowly carpenter from Nazareth, church planters will again be plentiful.—*Jim Mullett, Wellstone, Ohio*

Perhaps this would be a good time to raise questions about church-growth strategy. It often appears that those who work so hard at planting churches do so in isolation from the body of Christ already established. Giving pastoral attention to personal, spiritual and social healing in Jesus' name would be a strategy in which all could participate. People who have been served by faith and church would invite others. Those planting churches could also be nurtured and cared for rather than be overextended in their call to the extent that it makes them refer to the rest of the church as sinners.—*Urbane Peachey, Ephrata, Pa.*

Twelve years ago, my wife and I, along with another couple, answered a call from Ohio Conference to become church planters in a city near our rural Mennonite congregation in western Pennsylvania. I distinctly remember a clear sense of call, in part because there was no one else responding.

God uses those who are available to carry out his purposes. He delights in taking the weakest and the most unlikely to achieve his will. The blessings that come from obedience far exceed the effort of those who are obedient. To be a significant factor in the evangelism of the world, the Mennonite church will need to re-evaluate its priorities and emphases. In addition, it will need to grow in its understanding of spiritual and ministry gifts, accepting them as the very provision Jesus has given to carry out the exact purpose for which he came. Most Mennonites would have difficulty defining apostolic ministry because strong teaching and appropriate appreciation of ministry gifts have been lacking in the Mennonite church. Will we compromise the commission of Jesus to promote a man-made order of priorities?—*Ron Troyer, Waterford, Pa.*

Agricultural criminals?

I am a self-employed, private agricultural consultant working in the area of soil fertility, plant nutrient, irrigation and soil tilth management. My clients and I work very hard to feed you and the people of the world and, at the same time, preserve the environment.

Recently one of my clients, a young person in his 30s, shared with me how the position his church was taking on the environment and temporary laborers makes him feel like a criminal. He uses commercial fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides and hires temporary, primarily Hispanic, laborers in his operation. He was deeply hurt and very concerned for his church because of misinformation they had received and accepted at face value.

As I thought about what this client shared, these questions came to me: Is this happening in the Mennonite church? How many Mennonite young people would consider an agriculture-related career? How many Mennonite college graduates go into agriculture? Are many Mennonite farmers also being made to feel like criminals?—*Marvin D. Kauffman, Albany, Ore.*

Best of times

The editorial "Lessons Under the Sun" (*The Mennonite,* April 28) was a wonderful reminder that the world is not a terrible place. We in the West are living in the best times of all of history. Although the church has much to do, it is inspiring to look at what God has accomplished through God's people.—*Dayvid H. Graybill, Houston*

Work as one

I read with joy "EMM President to Urban Leaders: Forgive Us" (*The Mennonite,* April 7) until I arrived at the sixth paragraph. Did I misunderstand it? The comment by Charles

theMennonite
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Cover photo
by Mark Pavlik

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s say readers say

Bulford that "one day we will write your history because there will be more of us than there are of you" can hardly foster unity. Rather, it continues to divide, to put "us" against "them." There indeed needs to be forgiveness for the past, but let's strive to change the pattern and look to the future working together as one, undivided in God's mission.—*Carol Herr, Lancaster, Pa.*

Principle and privilege

In "Once Met with Silence, Abortion Issue Now Generates Advocacy, Discussion" (*The Mennonite*, May 5), Anna Bowman asks "Do we have the right to make our beliefs the law of the land, especially when others aren't so privileged?" If she's implying there are no poor, underprivileged Mennonites, I don't believe she's correct. Anyway, the data I've seen on the subject indicates that wealthy, privileged people have a much more favorable attitude toward abortion than poor people do.

The pro-life position is the only point of view any person of principle can possibly take. Since abortions kill children, Mennonites who defend the right to abortion should be classified as opponents of our church's peace theology.—*Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

We Mennonites who seem to speak and write so much about peace and justice ought to be at the forefront of an outcry to our government and our society against this travesty of abortion. I'm sad that what I occasionally hear and read in Mennonite forums is like a whisper instead of a passionate call to stop the killing. I would like to see my Mennonite church take a bold stand against this daily slaughter of innocent infants as it does against the U.S. military or any other source of violence.—*David H. Clymer, Shirleysburg, Pa.*

Sense of need and call rank above U.S. law for first MCC service assignment in Iraq

> I realized I couldn't return to the United States to watch this war on television.
>
> —*Wanda Kraybill*

AKRON, Pa.—The first Mennonite Central Committee worker in Iraq is scheduled to arrive there next month, even though U.S. law forbids Americans to enter the country. Wanda Kraybill from Lancaster, Pa., will be in Baghdad for three to six months assisting overworked Middle East Council of Churches staff to distribute relief items contributed by MCC and other agencies.

Kraybill has been an English teacher with MCC in Egypt for the last four years. She left Egypt May 23 for Amman, Jordan, where she will stay a week before taking the 12-hour bus trip to Baghdad.

"This is not an act of blatant civil disobedience," says Ray Brubacher, MCC's overseas program director. Rather, he says, Kraybill's assignment is a response to needs in a country deemed enemy and to her own sense of call.

"I'm going to Iraq with a strong sense that while I feel personally convicted to be there with the people, I am not doing it only for a personal adventure," Kraybill says. "I am going as a representative of the Mennonite church, of Christians in the West who are looking beyond political rhetoric, of those who care for Iraqis as humans."

Despite the ban, many Americans have been making trips to Iraq, including several MCC delegations. Brubacher says MCC is "99.9 percent sure" no actions will be taken against Kraybill. The worst realistic scenario, he says, would be confiscating her passport when she returns to the United States.

MCC Middle East director Ed Epp says, "We looked for a person of another nationality, but Wanda was the best candidate."

Kraybill's appointment was approved by the MCC executive committee at its April meeting, although some members had concerns. "How might this experience affect a young person like Wanda [age 26]?" asked committee member Vidya Narimalla. "What if later she wants to work in a federal job?"

This is not the first time MCC will place a U.S. citizen in a country in violation of U.S. laws. An American nurse served in Lebanon in the 1980s under similar conditions.

In February, as Kraybill's Egypt assignment was ending and tensions in the Persian Gulf were mounting, she felt "a growing sense that I had to respond to what was happening," she says. "I realized I couldn't return to the United States to watch this war on television."

But before contacting MCC about possibly serving in Iraq, Kraybill wanted to phone her parents, who responded enthusiastically. In the meantime, Epp called her to ask if she would consider an Iraq assignment because of her knowledge of Arabic language and culture.

"I nearly swallowed the phone," Kraybill says. "He had no idea that I was already being prepared to go. I was overwhelmed with a sense of pieces falling together in a way I can only describe as grace."—*Pearl Sensenig of MCC News Service with Rich Preheim*

Gone fishin'

Thai villagers, along with an Eastern Mennonite Missions team, examine their net to go fishing in a local pond. The project, started last year by EMM workers, supplements both income and diet for the families. The fish is tilapia, believed to be the fish in the biblical feedings of the multitude.

EMM photo by Xay Onelangsy

Eastern District hopes dialogue meetings can lead to confession of faith resolution

BOWMANSVILLE, Pa.—The Eastern District Conference has not resolved the question of endorsing the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC)-Mennonite Church (MC) confession of faith. But two meetings will be held to clarify different understandings of scriptural interpretation and of how to describe biblical authority.

The "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective," approved by GC and MC delegates in 1995, says the Bible is "trustworthy" and "fully reliable" but does not use the word "infallible." That is a point of contention in the Eastern District, which has yet to fully embrace the document. A motion to adopt the confession was tabled at last year's sessions.

A constitutional amendment presented to Eastern District delegates, meeting May 1-2 at Pine Grove Mennonite Church, Bowmansville, called for additional references to be made to historical doctrinal positions—specifically, a 1766 confession of faith by Cornelius Ris and a GC statement of doctrine adopted in 1941 at Souderton, Pa. The proposed amendment received 57 percent support, short of the 67 percent needed for adoption.

The Ris and Souderton documents are seen by some in the district as necessary to maintaining a more orthodox Anabaptist, evangelical stance on Scripture. But others believe the new confession is theologically solid and should be affirmed so as to cooperate with GC-MC integration efforts.

Dave Moyer, chair of Zion Mennonite Church in Souderton, sent a letter to delegates prior to the sessions arguing against adopting the Ris and Souderton amendment. Approving it would "reject the new confession and thwart integration," Moyer wrote.

Delegates also rejected an amendment to the constitutional amendment. It would have mentioned the 1995 confession along with the Ris and Souderton documents. It fell 11 votes shy of the 51 percent needed.

"Basically, we put off for another year coming to any conclusions about this issue," says Richard Woodcock, pastor of Indian Valley Mennonite Church in Harleysville, Pa. He worked along with representatives of 13 other congregations to draft the Ris and Souderton amendment. He also made the proposal for the two dialogue meetings in the coming year.

"I think having the two meetings is a positive idea if people can sit down, face each other and be honest with where they really are," Woodcock says. "Basically what it comes down to is, Can we be a conference or can't we?"

Basically what it comes down to is, Can we be a conference or can't we?

— *Richard Woodcock*

Jim Stutzman Amstutz, pastor of West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., and a supporter of the confession of faith, says the district made a fresh start toward resolution even though the confession issue remains.

"It was a draw—neither side won and neither side lost," he says. "But I think we've cleaned the slate, and I think the close votes show a move toward being more descriptive of where we really are."—*Laurie L. Oswald of* Mennonite Weekly Review

Church leaders urge test ban treaty ratification

WASHINGTON—In an ironic sense of unintentional timing, some 200 North American religious leaders on May 18 released a statement urging a permanent ban on all nuclear explosions after India conducted five underground nuclear tests on May 11 and 13.

Among the statement's signers are Ronald Mathies, Mennonite Central Committee executive director; Lynette Meck, MCC U.S. executive director; Jim Schrag, General Conference Mennonite Church general secretary; and George Stoltzfus, Mennonite Church general secretary. The statement calls on the U.S. Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty this summer. The treaty has been approved by 13 nations but will not become binding until it is ratified by all 44 nuclear-capable countries.

"For more than 40 years, the nuclear arms race dominated the Cold War policies of the United States," the statement reads. "Within our faith communities, those policies raised the profoundest questions about the sacredness of God's creation, our moral responsibilities and human destiny."

An even bolder statement, calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons, was signed by Canadian church leaders—including MCC Canada executive director Marv Frey—and sent to the Canadian government in February.

Staff members for senators Richard Lugar, R-Ind., and Sam Brownback, R-Kan., say letters from constituents will be critical in determining how they vote on the treaty. Sixty-seven votes will be needed for ratification.

There have been 2,051 known nuclear tests worldwide since 1945.—*J. Daryl Byler for MCC News Service*

Former Salvadoran soldier Doroteo Rivera, David Morrow's "enemy" turned pastoral colleague, has had his application for a religious worker visa approved by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. In a story in *The Mennonite* (Dec. 23, 1997) and *Gospel Herald* (Jan. 13), Morrow, a former Mennonite Central Committee worker in El Salvador and now pastor of Warden (Wash.) Mennonite Church, told of meeting Rivera in the United States in 1990. Rivera eventually moved to Warden, where he pastors Mision Evangelica Manantiales de Vida. But his future had been in limbo when his application for political asylum in the United States was denied. With his religous worker visa secured, Rivera now waits for his green card. Pacific Northwest Conference has been assisting him with the application process.

Seattle Mennonite Church and a Catholic convent in Morgantown, W.Va., hosted a May 4 meeting of investors in the international mining giant Freeport-McMoRan who are concerned about the company's controversial operations in Indonesia.

New Orleans-based Freeport runs the world's largest gold mine and third largest copper mine on the Indonesian island of Irian Jaya. Critics have charged the company with environmental destruction, human rights abuses and questionable ties with the country's shady political and military forces. The Seattle congregation's sizable Freeport stock was donated.

The roundtable meeting was held in New Orleans the day before Freeport's annual meeting. "Management has made it clear to us that we cannot discuss financially important social and environmental issues at our annual shareholders' meeting," says church member Robert Pauw.

Seattle last year submitted a shareholder resolution calling on Freeport to come clean about its Irian Jaya operation. The resolution was voted down.

MCC photo by Robert Neufeld

Angolans at a conflict resolution seminar try to get the person facing them to cross to their side of an imaginary line. The exercise, designed to examine ways of facilitating change, soon had people pulling and pushing others to get them across. The seminar was led by Mennonite Central Committee worker Janet Schmidt (center).

Angolans cross lines of conflict

Seminars search for ways to better church, society

LUANDA, Angola—About 90 church leaders met in late March and early April in Angola's capital for a series of five-day seminars on conflict, organized by the Council of Christian Churches (CICA) and Angolan Mennonites with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Janet Schmidt, an MCC peace education professor serving in neighboring Zambia, traveled to Angola to facilitate the seminars. Topics included: analyzing conflict, positions and interests; models of resolving conflict; restorative justice; nonviolent ways to facilitate change and healing; forgiveness; and reconciliation for victims and violators. The first seminar brought together Mennonite Brethren executives, pastors from the six Luanda MB parishes, Bible school students, youth and lay leaders. A second seminar included men and women leaders from the 18 member denominations of the CICA.

In an exercise called "The Line Game," seminar participants stood opposite each other over an imaginary line. People were told to try to get partners across an imaginary line. The result, almost without exception, was a physical struggle of pushing and pulling the opponent by force to the other side. In the discussion, participants reflected on nonviolent ways of facilitating change.

Church leaders say what they learned will be valuable in the home, church and country. "I'm going to use the material in my own church and on Trans World Radio programs where I preach in my native language," says Pastor Miranda of the Community Mennonite Church, one of two Mennonite denominations represented at the seminars.

For the past three years, no MCC workers have lived in Angola due to ongoing violence and difficulties securing visas. But MCC has maintained contact with CICA and with church health and development programs. MCC has also funded various projects and provided relief assistance.—*Robert Neufeld for MCC News Service*

Vigils join Colombian Catholics, Protestants

BOGOTA, Colombia—After decades of animosity and strife, Colombian Catholics and Protestants have found common ground. At 12:30 p.m. on the 19th of every month, Christians from various denominations gather for a vigil in Bogota's Simon Bolivar Plaza, seeking to raise awareness about the injustices and violence in Colombia.

The vigils also commemorate the assassinations of human rights workers Elsa and Carlos Alvarado and Mario Calderon, who were killed on May 19, 1997, by a paramilitary death squad backed by the Colombian army.

"We need to show Colombians that people in the church care about the suffering in this land," says vigil coordinator Bonnie Klassen, assistant to the director of the Mennonite peace and justice organization Justapaz. She is on a joint assignment through the Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions.

The vigils have brought together Colombian Catholics and Protestants, who have been at odds for half a century.—*Aimee Moiso for GCMC and MBM news services*

Loan was cut from different cloth

MEDA-initiated program sparked business growth

GRANADA, Nicaragua—When the factory where she worked closed seven years ago, textile worker Margarita Olivas decided to start her own business.

She took her $80 severance pay, bought as much fabric as she could afford and began selling it from a table on the sidewalk near the public market in the city of Granada, 25 miles east of the capital of Managua. Since banks wouldn't loan Olivas any money to expand her retail fabric business, she immediately reinvested sale revenues and cut personal expenses to the bone to increase working capital.

Olivas worked this way for three years until she heard about CHISPA, a microenterprise program started by Mennonite Economic Development Associates in Nicaragua. A loan of $128 from CHISPA was a turning point, she recalls.

The loan enabled Olivas to enlarge her inventory and diversify her product line. Soon she needed more space and more help. She rented larger quarters in the market and hired four helpers. As Olivas developed a track record with CHISPA, she was eligible for larger loans, most recently for $1,581.

Olivas also received business training from CHISPA. She learned how to control costs and keep business accounts. She also benefitted from the peer group relationships developed through CHISPA, which requires first-time borrowers to belong to small solidarity groups. "We learned to support each other to get ahead," Olivas says. "It was a great experience."

Last year, her husband joined Olivas in the business. Now they have also become fabric wholesalers. "My husband administers the business and I travel around to increase sales," she says. "We are working on becoming direct importers, finding a better locale and becoming suppliers for other material shops in the city."

Now that Olivas is established, the banks that ignored her before would like to have her business. But she says, "I will always prefer to work with CHISPA."—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

> It wasn't much, but it allowed me to increase my sales and to grow my business.
>
> —*Margarita Olivas*

Nicaraguans get North American retail order

WINNIPEG—An order from Pier 1 Imports for $70,000 worth of ceramic crafts has given a big boost to artisans in San Juan de Oriente, Nicaragua. The order was placed through PROARTE, a marketing and export company started by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

This is the second order through PROARTE by Pier 1. The giant North American retailer of specialty decorative home furnishings last year ordered $100,000 worth of vases, pots and bowls by a women's cooperative. "The first order was a big test," says Dieter Wittkowski, MEDA's director of Latin American and Caribbean operations. "Could the producers gear up production to fill the order in time? Could they find enough raw materials? Could they meet the quality requirements? The fact that Pier 1 came back with a second order shows that they were up to the challenge."

PROARTE was started by MEDA in 1993 to help Nicaraguan artisans sell their products in other countries.—*John Longhurst of MEDA News Service*

Argentine, Illinois Mennonites sign mission pact

CHOELE CHOEL, Argentina—Despite being separated by more than 5,000 miles, Mennonites in Argentina and Illinois have signed a covenant to work together to develop new churches and renew existing congregations in Argentina's southern Patagonia region.

The six-year agreement outlines a relationship among the Argentine Mennonite Church; the Mennonite Church in Patagonia; Arm in Arm, a group of individuals and congregations from Illinois Conference; and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), which will serve as a facilitator and coordinator of efforts.

"Mennonites in Illinois and Argentina ... want to join together for the purpose of supporting evangelism and church development ... and encouraging one another in mission," says the covenant, drafted in both English and Spanish and signed March 31. "We each understand that our participation will involve individual sacrifice as well as mutual benefit."

Although the new partnership was formalized in March during a visit to Argentina by 10 Illinois representatives and one from MBM, the relationship between Mennonites in the two countries has been fostered by mutual exchanges since 1995. The Illinois participants will provide financial, personnel and prayer support for the venture.

The Patagonia work is part of Mission 2000, a $600,000 program of domestic and foreign projects by Illinois Conference and MBM. MBM has or is in the process of facilitating dozens of similar direct links between church members and efforts in the mission fields.
—*MBM News Service*

One is a whole number

A Mennonite pastor presents a theology of singleness

by Shirley Yoder Brubaker

Why isn't a nice girl like you married? I heard that often during my 31 years as a single. As I got older and realized I might be single the rest of my life, I had a choice between living with strength or with weakness.

The first call on everyone's life, married or single, is to follow Jesus Christ. Everyone shares the same primary calling, but we live out that calling in a variety of circumstances.

I knew that the image of single people was not particularly positive—and it did not feel good that others pitied me. I realized my confusion about being single needed clarity if I were to live the healthy, productive life I had vowed I would live if unmarried. From a variety of sources—articles, books and my own thinking—I literally put on paper my theology of singleness.

Several passages of Scripture helped me. One was Psalm 139, not because it spoke directly to being unmarried but because it spoke to the struggle of self-worth I was going through: "O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit or stand. You chart the path ahead of me, and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. I can never be lost to your spirit. I can never get away from God. You both precede and follow me, and place your hand of blessing on my head."

God was saying: "You're OK, Shirley. There's nothing wrong with you. You are whole. I created you just the way I want you to be."

God loved me for who I was, not because of a role, such as wife or mother I might fill in life. I needed to accept the work of God—me—as wonderful.

I didn't know what my life would be like, unmarried. How difficult it might be in the workplace to be single. How difficult it might be in the congregation to be single. How difficult it might be in my own family to be single. But understanding that God had a purpose for my life helped me accept that my life would be different from my friends.

The New Testament says that ties of family count little in our relationship with God. What counts is choosing to hear and do the will of God. The true family of Jesus is made up of those who are willing to leave their families of origin, if necessary, to follow him. By doing the will of God we are the family of God.

For Jesus, a new spiritual family takes priority over the natural family. "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50).

My theology of singleness includes five points:

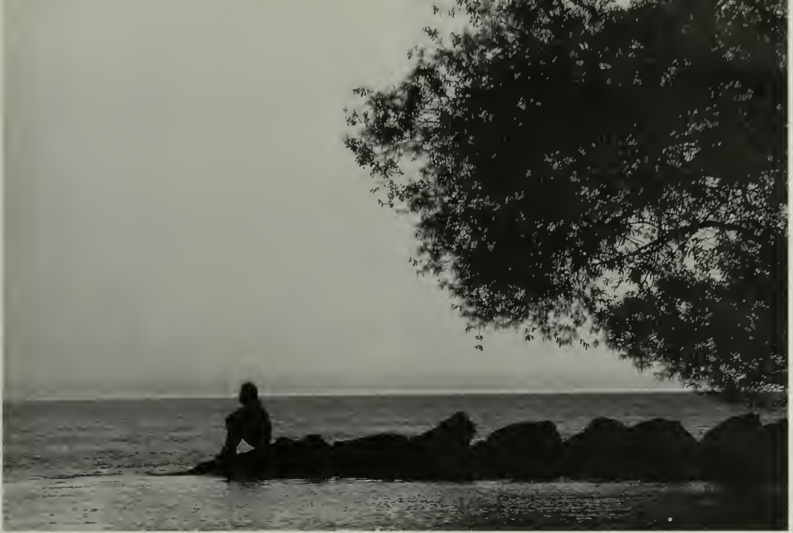
1. Follow Jesus: The first call on my life, and on everyone's life, married or single, is to follow Jesus Christ. Everyone shares the same primary calling, but we live out that calling in a variety of circumstances. Being married is one circumstance in life, and being single is another. Either circumstance is workable and even desirable.

The circumstance of your life may be the inability to have a child. Or an income makes you wealthy, sets you apart from others. Or a medical condition leaves you dependent on medication and limited in mobility for the rest of your life. Or a level of intelligence leaves you feeling cut off from the everyday lives of others. Or you grew up in a dysfunctional family. It is in our circumstances that we are called to live out our highest calling—to do the will of God.

2. Depend on God: God became for me an absolute necessity. No one else was in the house, so I carried on conversations with God. Often the verbal battles were loud and long. To this day I find it difficult to sit down in a chair to pray. God is the one constant in my life. There is no other.

3. Be yourself: Being married would not change me. I am as God created me. If I were a pessimist, I would become a married pessimist. If I were an introvert, marriage would not turn me into an extrovert. Marriage does not resolve personality weaknesses or meet all one's emotional needs. If anything, marriage accentuates the weaknesses and needs that we already have.

4. Give up rights: Being a Christian means giving up all rights to myself: my right to be married, to have children, to be loved, to be happy. If I claim those rights, then I am not accepting the circumstances of my life. And I



Pisces Photography, Mark Pavlik photo

will be forever unhappy with God, jealous of others, bitter about myself.

5. Be alone without being lonely: Certainly a person can be lonely while married; loneliness is perhaps the most invasive enemy a single person has. I found it helpful to make a distinction between being lonely and being alone. I had to learn to be able to say, "I am alone. That is a circumstance of being single. I cannot change that." But I could do something about being lonely. I had family that loved me. I had friends. There were organizations and people who needed my gifts.

Being single is often difficult and painful. Tim Stafford writes: "Is the difficulty intrinsic to singleness, or is it rooted in the anti-single feelings of our society? If single people were in a supportive environment, would they have the same difficulty?"

In some ways we have a struggle to be supportive because the church is so family-oriented. For many, family implies husband and wife and children. It is difficult to see a single person living alone as a family. I still cringe every time I use or hear the word "family" used in relation to church.

We as a church can help fill the emptiness and loneliness unmarrieds face, but we should not promise more than we can deliver. We cannot glibly say, "Our church family can be your family" if we don't have ways to make that happen.

If you are part of a small group, is there a single in that group? When you invite people to your home, are there only even places set around the table?

Do our congregational celebrations for adults only revolve around marriage? Bridal showers and wedding receptions and baby showers and 25th wedding anniversaries? A toaster or a set of towels cost as much for a single person as for a married couple. When I set up housekeeping after graduating from college, I received no gifts (except from my immediate family) to help offset the cost of furnishing a home. But at weddings, I couldn't help but notice the tables piled high with housekeeping gifts. I knew I did not fit into the celebrative life of the congregation.

More than the financial boost of all those gifts, they are a tangible way of saying to one another: "You belong. We are happy for you, and this gift is a symbol of our sharing your happiness." Many singles go through life without a congregation ever telling them that. Now that many young adults wait longer to marry or do not marry at all, is there another pattern for a congregation who wants to say, "Our family can be your family?"

Emerging singleness: When should a congregation acknowledge the transition from young adult to single adult? At Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., church mailboxes are given to young adults when they move out of the parental home and set up their own housekeeping arrangement or when they graduate from college. When does a young adult child have their own picture and their own listing in the church directory? Do you as a parent, or we in the church office, encourage that so that the young adult child acknowledges his or her emerging singleness?

Is every position in the congregation open to singles? Are singles visible to our children? Ushering, worship leading, teaching, mentoring, preaching? If we do not put singles in leadership positions, we are saying that singles are not as important or as responsible as

A ritual of wholeness and commitment:

"We invite you who are single to come and drink of the refreshing water in the pitcher on the table. As a church we want to be a source of refreshment to you in your journey as a single. We will see your coming alone as a symbol of the strength you have been given to live out God's call on your life.

"If there is another person or couple here who has been important to you as a single, you are welcome to bring them with you to the bowl of water on the other side of the table. Wash their hands or cool their foreheads with the water as a thank-you gesture for their special friendship with you.

"If you are married but have had a special relationship with someone in the congregation who is single, you are welcome to bring them to the pitcher of water and offer them a refreshing drink. Or bring them to the bowl of water and wash their hands as a symbol of their service to you.

"[The pastor] will be available at the front with a vial of oil. If you are finding the journey of singleness difficult and painful, come for anointing with oil for God's healing touch on your life."—*from a service held at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.*

In a world saturated with sex, singles model for us the undivided heart, being wary of relationships that distort one's primary relationship with Jesus Christ.

CLEO Photography

married people. That would be curious considering the New Testament slant that single people can offer more to the church than married people (1 Corinthians 7:32-34).

Do we watch our language? Language is important because words are powerful. In another congregation I was part of, a proposed job description for a committee included the statement, "The committee shall be composed of three couples." When I asked if they really meant to exclude singles, they said absolutely not. The sentence was amended to read "… be composed of four to six people."

Are we sensitive to worship services that exclude the unmarried? Celebrating Mother's Day or Father's Day can feel exclusive to people who do not have children, even those married. But a simple twist of emphasis turns those exclusive celebrations into being inclusive. Everyone has a mother, or a father, but not everyone is a mother or father. For a person who desperately wants to be a parent, the pain is tremendous. A worship service should heal wounds, not reopen them.

Do we teach our children to be single as well as married? Every time I say to a child, "When you are a mommy" or, "When you are a daddy," I imply that she or he will someday be married. When the youth group studies a series on sexuality, is there a Sunday for talking about what if I never marry?

Do we support single parents in their difficult role? Single parents appreciate offers of child care or invitations for a meal. A child without a father or a mother in the home needs to see role models of the missing parent. Ask the parent how you can be helpful.

How do you help the singles in your Sunday school class feel included? One small suggestion is that when introductions are being made around the circle, let everyone introduce themselves. I invite couples to not always sit together in Sunday school if singles are in the class.

Contributions by singles: Singles contribute immensely to the life of a congregation. Their greatest gift to us may be their celibacy.

Kathleen Norris, in her book *The Cloister Walk*, tells of her experiences as a married woman living for various lengths of time in monasteries. Two chapters deal with celibacy as she encountered it in the lives of the monks and nuns.

She writes: "I have been led to ponder celibacy that works, practiced by people who are fully aware of themselves as sexual beings but who express their sexuality in a celibate way. That is, they manage to sublimate their sexual energies toward another purpose than sexual intercourse and procreation. Are they perverse, their lives necessarily stunted? Cultural prejudice would say yes, but I have my doubts. I've seen too many wise old monks and nuns whose lengthy formation in celibate practice has allowed them to incarnate hospitality in the deepest sense. In them, the constraints of celibacy have somehow been transformed into an openness that attracts people of all ages, all social classes. They exude a sense of freedom."

In a world saturated with sex, singles model for us the undivided heart, being wary of relationships that distort one's primary relationship with Jesus Christ.

Shirley Yoder Brubaker is associate pastor at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

A generation of echoes

by Angela Lehman-Rios

We call on a mountain
which holds our voices,
tucks them in among
the trunks. Then next year
throws them back
at new visitors
who are surprised
like we were
to hear others' echoes.
 The words we
 thought we said
 return as something else:
 similar, but heavier.
 Words wait, gather,
 become the slow echo
 we hear when we speak.

Angela Lehman-Rios lives in Richmond, Va.

Ten questions to ask a single person other than, So, is there anyone special in your life?

by Mariann Martin

I would never ask a married person, while we're standing right there in the foyer after church, how the relationship with his or her spouse is going. It would be rude, none of my business. Yet it seems that since I'm single, my personal relationships with the opposite gender are a newspaper into which anyone can look and read aloud at will.

I go to church in search of a caring group that will inspire, love and support me in my daily walk with Christ. Asking about my latest romantic encounters is sometimes meant to be caring, but it feels like torture when I'm having a hard time dealing with being alone. It feels like prying if there is a budding relationship I want to protect. It feels annoyingly irrelevant on the days I'm content with my marital status. Caring and supportive it is not—especially when someone brings their curiosity into the first three minutes of conversation with me. After such encounters, I am tempted to act like one of my friends, who finds it more inspirational to go to the office on Sunday morning and catch up on work.

We need a new set of caring discussion starters. Next Sunday, after you smile and say, "How are you doing today?" try asking one of these questions:

1. How did you like the service today?
2. How's work / school going?
3. So, what special projects are you up to these days?
4. Have you seen / read anything interesting lately?
5. How is your family doing?
6. Do you have any travel plans?
7. What do you make of (some current event)?
8. Tell me about your week.
9. What are your plans for today?
10. We'd like to have lunch with you. Could we do that? What restaurant do you recommend? Or, Do you know how to get to our house?

There are myriad facets of life that have nothing to do with a diamond ring. It is wonderful to have someone ask about the many consuming passions to which I devote my time, concern and energy. I do appreciate all those who pray for my happiness. And often I do have the need to talk about the longing for love, the wish for affection or the fabulous new man I've just met. However, I would appreciate it if others would be respectful enough to allow me to bring up the topic on my own or at least wait until we're in private. If I do take someone into my confidence about the happenings in my heart—even if I handle the situation with humor—I am counting on that person to support me in my struggles and hopes. I am also trusting that person to lovingly keep my fragile personal thoughts and feelings out of this week's gossip column.

Marianne Martin teaches at Hesston (Kan.) College.

And now, a few quick comebacks for those who are trying to deflect unwanted inquiries:

- ***How's your love life?*** Yes, I do love life. In fact, this week I ...
- ***Are you dating anyone?*** Yes, I manage to date myself every time I mention what television shows I watched as a kid. Do you remember the episode where ...
- ***Are you seeing anyone?*** No, I'm not hearing voices either; are you?
- ***How's it going with you and so-and-so?*** I was wondering the same thing about you and your spouse. You go first.
- ***When are you getting married?*** June 32nd. Money gifts will be appreciated. Send them to my address anytime between now and then.
- ***So ... is there anyone special in your life?*** Yes, there are many special people in my life, and you're one of them.

—Marianne Martin

Events

Topeka (Ind.) Mennonite Church, centennial celebration, June 27. Contact: 219-593-2389 or 219-593-3701.

Allegheny Conference annual meeting, July 9-12, Mount Pleasant, Pa.

Ohio Conference annual meeting, July 10-12, Bluffton, Ohio.

Births

Dayton, Bryn Athena Beiler, April 11, to John and Lori (Beiler) Dayton, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Dilbone, Stephanie Marie, April 21, to Jon and Lisa (Bacher) Dilbone, Albany, Ore.

Esbenshade, Conrad Zane, April 25, to Mary and Ted Esbenshade, Marietta, Pa.

Frye, Miles Reed, April 8, to Andrew and Gladys Frye, Salunga, Pa.

Gehman, Elias Abraham, April 27, to Carol (Miller) and Michael Gehman, Bally, Pa.

Herrmann, Nathaniel James, April 20, to Jason and Rita (Wyse) Herrmann, Goshen, Ind.

Hildebrand-Schlegel, Isaac John, April 5, to Dianne (Hildebrand) and Harold Hildebrand-Schlegel, St. Jacobs, Ont.

Hunsecker, Taylor Ann, April 21, to Jeffrey and Kerry (Herr) Hunsecker, Manheim, Pa.

Janzen, Jacob Thomas, April 13, to Mark and Shelley (Osborne) Janzen, Harvard, Neb.

Lawrence, Nakai Elijah, March 15, to Darcell and Nigel Lawrence, Bronx, N.Y.

Miller, Logan John, May 4, to Dawnita and Mike Miller, Hutchinson, Kan.

Ott, Jared Matthew, April 28, to Christine (Wasilewski) and Randall Ott, Papillion, Neb.

Pool, Bethany Rae, April 3, to Brenda (Wadel) and Dean Pool, Chambersburg, Pa.

Sacoman, Brandon Robert Elric, Feb. 19, to Jessica (Hoisington) and Robert Sacoman, Pueblo, Colo.

Snyder, Hannah Elizabeth, April 11, to David and Elizabeth (Skinner) Snyder, Millersburg, Ind.

Sommers, Paige Elizabeth, April 19, to Diane and Wendell Sommers, Hartville, Ohio.

Spicher, Daniel Thomas, April 16, to Jean (Leaman) and Jeff Spicher, Charlottesville, Va.

Wolfe, Jonathan Lee, April 23, to Cara (Plank) and Don Wolfe, West Liberty, Ohio.

Wolgemuth, Jillian Susanna, April 28, to Betsy (Sayre) and Randy Wolgemuth, Mount Joy, Pa.

Young, Keaton Philip, April 20, to B.J. and Lisa (Krehbiel) Young, Topeka, Kan.

Marriages

Colistro/Galassini: Amy Colistro, Pueblo, Colo., and Doug Galassini, Pueblo, March 21.

Epp/Janzen: Audrey Epp, Henderson, Neb., and Paul Janzen, Henderson, April 24.

Graber/Nofziger: Katie Graber, Washington, Iowa, and Jon Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio, April 25, by Keith Graber-Miller.

Ingenthron/Unruh: Michael Ingenthron, Grantville, Kan., and Carol Unruh, Topeka, Kan., May 2, by Roger Neufeld Smith.

Nofsinger/Schrock: Miriam Nofsinger, Peoria, Ill., and Marvin Schrock, Eureka, Ill., March 14, by Mark Miller.

Deaths

Bartel, Rosina Gaeddert, 101, North Newton, Kan., died March 25. Survivors: children Ruth Ann Giggy, Melvin, Thelma, Lewis; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: March 28 by Darrell Fast and Norma Johnson.

Carter, Lawrence E., 81, Waynesboro, Va., died April 9. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Linda Miller, Paul; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: April 11 at Waynesboro by Stanlee Kauffman and Charles Ramsey.

Crilow, Earl, 78, Millersburg, Ohio, died May 1. Survivors: wife, Maxine; children Richard, Roger, Rita Hummel, Bob, Lynn; 14 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: May 3 at Millersburg by Carl Wiebe and Chris Mast.

Ehrisman, Anna Miller, 90, Beemer, Neb., died April 27. Survivors: children Don, Roy; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: April 30 at Beemer by Roger Hazen.

Epp, Isaac P., 92, Henderson, Neb., died April 25. Survivors: children Alda Reimer, Leona Capps, Freda Edelman, Philip; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: April 27 at Henderson by John Yoder-Schrock.

Forrer, David, 83, Orrville, Ohio, died April 21. Survivors: wife, Dorothy; children David, Darrell, Dennis, Cheryl Phillips; six grandchildren. Burial: April 23 at Orrville by John and Barbara Lehman.

Geomans, Ora "Peggy," 73, Albany, Ore., died April 20. Survivors: husband, George; son, Ross; four grandchildren. Burial: April 21 at Marion, Ore., by Lynn Miller.

Hochstetler, Nettie Gingerich, 74, Apple Creek, Ohio, died April 19. Survivors: husband, Harvey; children Roy, Elsie Zuercher, Ken, Ron; six grandchildren. Burial: April 22 at Kidron, Ohio, by Terry Shue and Herman Myers.

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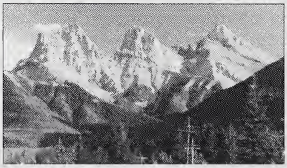

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Kennel, Matilda Cropp, 104, Albany, Ore., died April 16. Survivors: children Walter, Violet, Vera Lee, Esther Jones, Wilbur, Pete, Doris Delp, Laverne Nofziger, Ruth Nisly, Delmar; 25 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren; 11 great-great-grandchildren. Burial: April 20 at Albany by Lynn Miller.

Miller, Esta Marie Stutzman, 87, Albany, Ore., died April 20. Survivors: children Eldon, Richard, William, Marilyn Smucker, Ruth Yoder, Arla Neuschwander; 19 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren. Burial: April 24 at Albany by John Willems and Al Tschiegg.

Overholt, Clarence D., 83, West Liberty, Ohio, died April 19. Survivors: wife, Mabel; children Fred, John, Galen, Irene Kauffman, Lois, Ann Mellott, Emily; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: April 23 at West Liberty by Larry Augsburger, Eldon King and Wes Yoder.

Richard, Carl, 89, Aberdeen, Idaho, died April 26. Survivors: wife, Pauline; children Margaret Ann Wahlen, Ralph; three grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: April 29 at Aberdeen by Monty Ledford.

Sauder, Carl S., 78, New Holland, Pa., died April 25. Survivors: wife, Sarah; sons John, Eric; stepsons Steven Hess, Ned Hess, Ben Hess; stepdaughters Margaret Zimmerman, Lisbeth Hess, Nancy Husband, Jan Howell; nine grandchildren; 19 stepgrandchildren; two great-grandchildren; two stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: April 29 at New Holland by Frank Shirk.

Sell, Clare H., 85, Salunga, Pa., died April 27. Survivors: husband, Menno; children Harlan, Glen, Ivan, Lois, Mary Bourne; 14 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Burial: April 30 at Doylestown, Pa., by Larry Bergey.

Showalter, Martha Susan, 80, Broadway, Va., died May 7. Burial: May 10 at Broadway by Randall Shull and Myron Augsburger.

Stevens, Howard, 87, Aberdeen, Idaho, died April 11 of a heart attack. Survivors: children Mary Leisy, Elizabeth Dahlstrom; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: April 15 at Aberdeen by Monty Ledford.

Stutzman, John, 78, Wisner, Neb., died April 17. Survivors: children Roy, Mary Ruhe; one grandchild. Burial: April 20 at Beemer, Neb., by Roger Hazen.

Sumpter, James E., 60, Springs, Pa., died April 11 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Marian; children James, Joseph, Tami Adams, Nancy Hogan, Valerie Barrett, Kimberly Conway; 14 grandchildren. Cremated. Memorial service: April 13 by Steven Heatwole.

Widmer, Willard, 69, Washington, Iowa, died April 23 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Phyllis; children Tamera Erb, Theresa; three grandchildren. Body donated for medical research.

Yordy-Litwiller, Ada M., 86, Delavan, Ill., died April 21. Survivors: children Arlene Sutter, Phyllis, Margaret Mast, Mary Stalter, Paul; nine grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Burial: April 25 at Hopedale, Ill., by Michael Knowles.

Weaver, Paul E. Jr., 55, Akron, Pa., died April 30 of a pulmonary blood clot. Survivors: children Ann Lau, Leigh, Zachary; two grandchildren; parent, Ada. Burial: May 5 at Lititz, Pa., by Urbane Peachey and Dawn Yoder Harms.

Yates, Helen Marie King, 79, Harrisonburg, Va., died May 1. Burial: May 5 at Dublin, Va., by Howard Miller and J. Otis Yoder.

Yoder, Danielle Lydia, infant, Shipshewana, Ind., died April 3. Survivors: parents, Marlin and Helen Yoder. Burial: April 5 at Shipshewana by John Murray.

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Classifieds

Mennonite Mutual Aid is seeking a ***promotional writer*** who will be responsible for writing and editing materials for various areas of the organization. Qualified candidates will have a four-year degree in communications, English or related field, plus four years' professional writing experience or six years' professional writing experience. Other preferred qualifications include project management skills, innovative thinking, effective communication skills, deadline sensitive, and prior writing experience for insurance and/or financial products. MMA offers a competitive salary, excellent benefits and a desirable work environment. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply.

Send fax or resume to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 219-533-5264.

Indian Creek Foundation, Harleysville, Pa., a not-for-profit organization providing a full array of services to people with developmental disabilities in the Franconia Mennonite Conference area, 25 miles northeast of Philadelphia, is currently seeking a ***director for residential services.*** Responsibilities encompass respect for community and development of residential community services; understanding and experience with managed care as it relates to individual's need for connectedness; and medical and psychiatric supports of these individuals. Requirements: positive history of team leadership, financial acuity, working knowledge of Windows-based computer software, master's degree in related field, five or more years of leadership experience (in MR field preferred).

Please forward resume and salary requirements to Human Resources, Indian Creek Foundation, P.O. Box 225, Harleysville, PA 19438; fax 215-256-3018. EOE

Landis Homes is seeking a ***vice president of resident services*** to assist the president and provide administrative support and guidance to various departments including health services. Qualifications include a college degree in health administration or related management field. Supervisory experience in long-term care preferred. Nursing Home Administrator license helpful.

Submit resume to Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-581-3936.

Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., seeks half-time ***youth pastor,*** beginning summer 1998. Responsibilities include relational, programming, administrative and larger church duties. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree, seminary studies preferred. Salary commensurate with MBCM guidelines.

Inquiries and requests for a copy of the job description should be directed to pastor Phil Kniss, 540-434-1604; email PVMChurch@aol.com. Resumes should be mailed to Park View Mennonite Church, attn. Sherrill Glanzer, 1600 Park Road, Harrisonburg VA 22802.

Portland Mennonite Church is seeking candidates for the position of ***associate/youth pastor.*** Interested people should contact Leroy Chupp, 5117 SE 33rd Place, Portland, OR 97202.

Sarasota Christian School (grades K-12; enrollment 460) is currently accepting applications for the 1998-99 school year for the following positions: ***athletic director, media center specialist,*** and teachers for ***kindergarten, Spanish (K-12) and middle school.***

To request an application, contact Jean Martin, K-8 principal, or Eugene Miller, administrator, Sarasota Christian School, 5415 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232; 941-371-6481.

Mennonite Central Committee has urgent opening for ***legislative assistant for domestic affairs*** at the MCC Washington Office. Salaried staff position with primary responsibility for U.S. domestic issue coverage. Qualifications include commitment to Christian faith, active church membership, and nonviolent peacemaking. Candidates should have education and life experiences that have exposed them to systemic realities of poverty, racism and injustice; be committed to and knowledgeable of Mennonite or Brethren in Christ church, and demonstrate strong oral and written communication skills. Related work experience and master's degree preferred.

If interested in a job description or application, please contact Prem Dick or Goldie Kuhns in the MCC Human Resources Department; 717-859-1151; email psd@mcc.org or gpk@mcc.org. Applications due June 15.

Classifieds

Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa.: ***Business & professional persons retreat*** July 10-12, 1998, featuring Chris Halverson, one-time acting U.S. Senate Chaplain and initiator of the National Prayer Breakfast. Register for this inspirational weekend at 1-800-822-7505.

Softball teams, church softball tournament: ***5 games guaranteed.*** July 3-5, 1998, Dublin, Ohio. Call Ron Headings, 614-873-8859.

The Hermitage, southern Michigan: Not tricks or psychobabble, but a biblical and historical ***study-retreat setting*** for tools and understandings basic to companioning disciples or Jesus. Weekends each quarter, beginning fall 1998 to 2000.

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Central Christian High School, Kidron, Ohio, has these openings: ***science/math, P.E./math, grade 8 language arts, bus drivers, custodian.*** Contact Fred Miller, administrator, 330-857-7311; fax 330-857-7331.

Greencroft, Inc., a retirement community sponsored by Mennonite Health Services, is seeking a ***vice president of operations.*** The position reports to the president and CEO and provides executive leadership for the day-to-day operations of the Goshen, Ind., campus. Qualified candidates should have experience in retirement community operations management; graduate studies are desirable.

Send resume with salary history and appropriate references to Tim Croyle, SPHR, director of human resources, Greencroft Inc., P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46527-0819; 219-537-4038; fax 219-537-4067.

Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a ***science / Bible instructor.*** Teaching responsibilities include physical science, general biology, advanced biology, chemistry and one Bible class. Salary range $19,750-$29,850.

Send resume to Freeman Academy, attn. Larry Horner, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029.

Bethel Mennonite Church, rural Inman, Kan., seeks a ***pastor.*** Average Sunday attendance is about 240. Candidates should submit resume, letter of interest or inquiries to Chris Weaver, search committee chair, 348 Arrowhead Road, Inman, KS 67546; 316-585-6907.

Eastern Mennonite Missions Discipleship Ministries Department seeks ***assistant program administrator.*** Begins July 1998. Responsibilities include: assist with program administration, develop systems for international and urban young adult participation, administer teams.

Contact Keith Blank at 717-898-2251 before June 30.

Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa., is expanding its ministerial team by adding a full-time ***youth minister.*** Interested people should send resume to Search Committee, Franconia Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 26, Franconia, PA 18924-0026.

Bethania Mennonite Personal Care Home needs a full-time ***assistant director of nursing.*** Qualifications: eligible for MARN registration; B.N. degree or equivalent; demonstrated managerial competency, preferably with recent experience in a senior nursing position in the geriatric field; excellent interpersonal and leadership skills; ability to speak German would be an asset. Closing date: June 2. Please advise of earliest date of availability. Only successful applicants will be contacted.

Send resume to A. Kampen, D.O.N./assistant administrator, 1045 Concordia Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2K 3S7; fax 204-667-7078.

Bluffton College seeks applicants for a one-year appointment in ***criminal justice and sociology*** (with the possibility of extension) beginning fall 1998. Ph.D. preferred; ABD candidates are also invited to apply. The successful candidate must be academically prepared to teach at least the following courses: Introduction to Juvenile Justice; Law, Justice and Society; Social Problems, and one section of Introduction to Sociology each quarter.

Bluffton College is a growing, Mennonite-related college. It welcomes applications from qualified individuals who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Send letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three letters of references and official transcripts to Joetta H. Schlabach, special assistant to the dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Review of applications will begin June 15 and continue until an appointment is made. Additional information is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac. EOE

Question #11:

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by Gordon Houser

If you are what you eat, who are you? Food plays a large part in everyone's life. We all depend on eating and spend at least part of each day providing ourselves and perhaps others with something to eat. We work, among other reasons, "to put bread on the table."

Mennonites and food go together like, well, zwieback and borscht. Or something like that. Before I knew much else about Mennonites, I knew they were supposed to be good cooks. The first time my mother, who is not Mennonite, attended a Mennonite relief sale, she tried the borscht. She said, "I'd been making that for years, but I called it cabbage soup."

So much for "Mennonite food." We may as well call enchiladas or egg rolls or curry Mennonite food as well. Nevertheless, food often defines who we are—as individuals, as families, as a cultural group. Should it?

Jokes about Mennonites and food abound, like the one that asks: How many Mennonites does it take to screw in a light bulb? Answer: four—one to screw it in and three to bring the food. This is good fun, but are we simply people who like to eat heavy, sugary food?

The subject of food raises questions about the influence of the surrounding culture:

- Are we partakers of "fast food" and how does this affect our family life?
- How healthy is our diet?
- Do we accept the prevailing message that women must be thin to be beautiful?
- Where does our food come from?
- How do our eating habits affect the earth and people in developing countries?

These can serve as discussion starters, but add this one: Can we have fellowship without eating? Why or why not?

The Bible, of course, is filled with references to eating. Like most cultures, ancient Jewish culture took eating seriously. Jesus got in trouble for eating with the wrong people. With whom do you eat or refuse to eat?

I'll stop. It's time for coffee break.

films

In *City of Angels*, based on Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*, an angel (Nicolas Cage) falls in love with a self-reliant heart surgeon (Meg Ryan). Will the angel give up eternity to become flesh-bound? While not as good as Wenders' film, it raises good questions about what is real. At the same time it offers the typical myth of romantic love.

books

Saints and martyrs: Two recent books from Orbis help us reflect on our own faithfulness by looking at the lives (and deaths) of faithful Christians from the past.

- *All Saints* by Robert Ellsberg (Orbis, 1998, $19.95) is a book of daily reflections on saints, prophets and witnesses for our time, one for each day of the year. It includes the well-known and less-known, from Therese of Lisieux to Mother Teresa, from Moses to Gandhi.
- *Martyrs*, edited by Susan Bergman (Orbis, 1998, $15), collects essays by contemporary writers on 20th-century martyrs, mostly Christian, but not all. This book presents not only exemplary lives but exemplary writers, including Larry Woiwode, Ron Hansen, Carolyn Forche, Julia Alvarez, Marilynne Robinson, Paul Mariani and Kathleen Norris.

40 spoons of sugar per day is too hard to swallow

by Ted Lewis

As goods increase, so do those who consume them. —Ecclesiastes 5:11 NIV

Along with gold and silver, sugar was highly prized by New World discoverers. After native laborers were killed, African slaves were shipped to the Caribbean and Brazil to grow sugarcane. As sugar became more available in Europe, its popularity soared.

John Wesley, however, bucked the tide of his consumer culture. In a letter to encourage Wilberforce's campaign against slavery, Wesley wrote, "I have refused sugar for years because it was bought at the price of cruelty."

Around the time of the *Amistad* slave ship incident (1840s), the average American ate two teaspoons of sugar per day. By 1905, after gaining control over Cuba and the Philippines, Americans consumed 20 teaspoons daily. By 2000, we will ingest 40 teaspoons per day.

It's popular, but it's not without a price. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker David Schrock-Shenk's encounter with a Filipino woman (see *The Mennonite*, Nov. 25, 1997) made me think. With 25 cents from hoeing sugarcane for 12 hours in the sun, she was buying some rice and a small tin of sardines for her family's supper.

This year I've chosen to not eat sugar, both for health and justice reasons. I was also encouraged by the "Sugar to Protein" campaign for Laotian bomb victims. According to Kori Leaman-Miller of MCC, money that we choose not to spend on sugar can support better diets for Laotians who would otherwise sell their livestock.

Sugar, like our leisure culture, allows us to reward ourselves daily. But as demand and dependency increase, so does our parasitic relation to sugar growers, making it hard for us to pray with integrity, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Ted Lewis attends Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan.

Pontius' Puddle

It's fantastic to be freed from earthly fetters such as hunger, but, frankly, I miss the potlucks.

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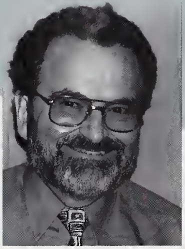

J. Lorne Peachey

'He who refrains from marriage will do better'

It happened to me on Aug. 10, 1987. On that day, Emily's and my 24th wedding anniversary, I passed a milestone: I had lived married for as many years as I had been single.

Since then, I have been married 11 years more. I've come to enjoy having someone in the house when I come home from work—or my being there when she gets home. I like the contentment that comes from having someone with whom to share my ideas, my frustrations, my joys. Marriage is, I've decided, one of the better choices I've made.

The majority of the church is like me: married. But not all. Some are single because of death, some because of divorce, some by choice, some for other reasons. If we listen to all single people carefully, we'll hear that my married comfortableness can lead to assumptions that make church difficult for them. Shirley Yoder Brubaker (p. 8) and Marianne Martin (p. 11) give examples in their articles this issue.

Reading the Bible doesn't exactly make me comfortable with my comfortableness about marriage and family. Sure, we have God's words about marriage in Genesis 2:24. But, as anyone who has ever searched the Scriptures for a wedding text soon discovers, this is about the only passage that addresses marriage and the family directly. By contrast, we have Jesus seeming to shun his mother and brothers in Mark 3:31-35 and declaring that his family are those who do God's will. And then there's Paul, who, writing in 1 Corinthians 7:25-39, clearly shows his bias for singleness: "He who refrains from marriage will do better."

> We in the church should have another way. Here is where to be single should be at least as good as to be married.

So what do I, a married man, do with Paul's words? Do I write them off as, at best, directives to a people expecting the imminent return of Jesus? Or are they, at worst, the bitter words of a frustrated bachelor?

I'm not sure I understand all that Paul was trying to get at with these words. But they do spur me to examine some of my attitudes and my assumptions:

1. Marriage is the norm; singlenesss is deviant. Few of us would say this out loud. Instead, we laugh about "old maids," "left-over blessings" and "gay bachelors"—in short, you're either married or something is wrong. The idea that anyone would deliberately *choose* singleness is difficult for many of us to comprehend. Yet this is precisely the ideal the apostle Paul holds up for us. At the very least, Paul's words should have us marrieds think through the life we have chosen as thoroughly as many singles are forced to think through theirs.

2. Family ties are what matter most. Again, few of us would say this directly, but it's still the way we live. It happens when blood lines and kinship determine how we think about the church and participate in it. It happens when the never-marrieds, divorced and widowed do not feel comfortable at church functions because these are so couple- and family-oriented. Singles in the church can remind us that, as Christians, our first commitment is to our Lord and Savior, not to either marriages or families.

3. Roles are what define us. I recently spent 72 hours with a group of men, during which we were not supposed to talk about our jobs. We all soon gravitated to our families in our small talk—except for the 30-year-old who wasn't married and didn't have a family; we had a difficult time including him in our conversation.

Ever notice how, even in the church, most of our talk with each other revolves around jobs and families? Perhaps it is the singles who can help us grow in sharing with each other about what should bring us to church in the first place: our relationship with God and our loyalty to Jesus Christ.

So much in our world conspires against the single. From advertisements to books to TV talk shows, the assumption is that most people are either in love, recovering from when they were or searching for a new one. There is little or no room for the person who is single.

We in the church should have another way. Here is the place where to be single is at least as good as to be married. Here is where all, married and single, are subject to the lordship of Jesus Christ. And here is where together we spread God's kingdom—whatever our marital status.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

June 2, 1998

what do Mennonites think?

5 Weathering Indonesia's storm

7 Homosexuality resolutions up for vote

8 Mennonites united but uninformed

15 Power looks different from on top

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Discipline debate

The position that conferences should not expel congregations but solve all differences by dialogue ("A Search for Faithfulness," April 28) merits these considerations: (1) To remove the ability of a conference to expel member congregations is not organizationally sound. Few, if any, voluntary organizations place themselves in such an untenable position. (2) No mention was made of the writings of Menno Simons on church discipline, which are extensive and strict. (3) The General Conference Mennonite Church position on dialogue and its degree of congregational autonomy has contributed to negative church growth in recent decades. The Amish and conservative Mennonite groups, which are clear on boundary maintenance, are nearly equal in number and growing faster than the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church. (4) It seems assumed that in dialogue, both sides give and take. But in real life, the position of the conservative or traditionalist is more vulnerable. The shift is nearly always toward the liberal point of view. (5) The absence of the word "sin" is itself a telling point. How un-Anabaptist. —*Elmer S. Yoder, Hartville, Ohio*

"A Search for Faithfulness" notes we are out of step with our own tradition and, more importantly, with apostolic tradition if we assume conferences may disfellowship congregations. The Swiss Anabaptist tradition has been clear on affirming such a congregational polity. The Low Country Anabaptist tradition is not quite as clear on this matter. Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, for example, both wielded a strong, episcopal authority. But Dutch Anabaptism before 1536 and certainly within the last several centuries has also been congregational in polity. (There are some Mennonite and Amish groups today that are more closely aligned with the quasi-episcopal approach of Menno and Dirk, something that deserves more attention than can be given here.)

I hope "A Search for Faithfulness" will be required reading for any and all church committees wrestling with the issue of congregational discipline.—*Leonard Gross, Goshen, Ind.*

"A Search for Faithfulness" states there is no biblical basis for disciplining congregations. In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus threatens discipline of five of the seven congregations. One is even threatened with the removal of its lampstand. Would it not be reasonable from these examples to assume that conferences would have the right and even the responsibility to discipline their member congregations?—*James Mullet, Guernsey, Sask.*

Much thanks to David Brubaker, Tim Schrag and Carolyn Schrock-Shenk for finally bringing some reason, clarity and perspective to the issue of disfellowshipping congregations. Hopefully these words will help cool the urge to purge that has been gaining momentum at an alarming pace. I think the authors offered sound, functional advice for the new denomination. I hope the Integration Committee is listening.—*Mark A. Regier, Elkhart, Ind.*

Editorial comment

I was interested to read J. Lorne Peachey's editorial "What It Could Mean to Be Integrated" (May 5). I was glad it dawned on him that General Conference Mennonites are also his brothers and sisters. I pray that the next step may be that all who call Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior, regardless of denominational affiliation, may be seen as siblings in the community of faith. The people of God include millions of folks who have little or no knowledge of Mennonites.—*Gary Olsen-Hasek, Portland, Ore.*

J. Lorne Peachey's editorial is the most inspiring piece I have ever read on integration. Thank you for reminding us, through your own experience, how exciting it is to create something new.—*Steve Shenk, Harrisonburg, Va.*

I just read J. Lorne Peachey's editorial, for which I praise God. Jesus will care for his church. Thank God you and I are included. —*Jacob C. Kulp, Bally, Pa.*

Earlier today I read Rich Preheim's editorial "Lessons Under the Sun" (April 28). Is it possible what we see in our time is as Jesus said of salt that has lost its saltiness: tossed out and trodden under foot?—*Betty Lou Olson, Calico Rock, Ark.*

Cataract surgery

The May 5 issue told how integration has moved ahead with the Beachy Amish, Kleine Gemeinde and native Costa Ricans in Costa Rica ("A Fresh Breath of Life"). Forty-five years ago, Sanford Yoder, we and others worked together at Brook Lane Hospital, directed by Mennonite Central Committee. We discovered that liberal General Conference

theMennonite

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Worship attendance by denomination

	WEEKLY OR MORE	1-2 TIMES A MONTH	FEW TIMES A YEAR	NEVER
MC/GC	90	6		0
BAPTIST	58	20		4
CATHOLIC	59	15		5
LUTHERAN	47	22		
METHODIST	48	15		
PRESBYTERIAN	48	14		

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s say readers say

Mennonites, Conservative Mennonites and the Beachy Amish were kissin' cousins. We matured rapidly in many ways. We had all changed, becoming far more tolerant and kind, less opinionated, perhaps realizing we did not have the entire truth after all.

Let us remove our cataracts in order to have a clear vision of how our love is manifested in one another. We need not fully agree with everyone in everything; rather, let us show respect, withhold our judgment and listen to one another.—*Ray and Ella Judy Harnly, Manheim, Pa.*

Crossing the border

Our Canadian church leaders seem to be breathing a sigh of relief that there will be a Canada-United States partition. I'm not at ease with the one-denomination, two-country structure. Why should the 49th parallel be the defining model? Why do we allow the border to obscure, to break unity? We had an excellent model in the Northwest Conference for working across boundaries. Sure there are U.S. issues and Canadian issues to deal with. Surely we can be more imaginative than to let a border be the defining principle in how we will organize our church. It just does not speak of unity.

As a graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Associated Mennonite Bbiblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., I never did see a need for the political definition, but I did see a huge need for us to learn to listen to each other and work at consensus building instead of riding roughshod over each other. It seems to me that it is this latter fear that has brought us to where we are—dividing the church on political lines—because being sensitive to each others' needs was not really a high priority. That makes me sad.—*Jake Nickel, Saskatoon*

Cover photo
by Robert Maust

Today [Jesus would] have a bandana, a Grateful Dead T-shirt and a weedwacker.

—David A. Stevens, "Do Not Hold Me," April 7

Can a resurrected Jesus … be visualized in a garb advocating, or at least accepting, unholiness?

—Hans Wenger, Readers Say, May 5

The living and the Deadheads

I took issue with Hans Wenger's comments regarding Jesus wearing a Grateful Dead T-shirt (Readers Say, May 5). "How can Jesus advocate or at least accept unholiness?" True, Jesus should only advocate for the supremely righteous. Everyone else is condemned to death, and such an important person as Jesus really shouldn't waste his time on a futile cause. "The edifying message of the article does not require a secular inclusion on the side." It is better if we keep the lines between holy and secular clearly drawn. This would avoid any of those people coming to our side. "The inclusion of the Grateful Dead T-shirt trivializes the extensive negative effect that the Dead has had and continues to have on godly spirituality." Again, it would be better if we didn't mention anything about those people. Our godly spirituality is so precious and so fragile, we can't do anything to disturb it. "The illustration itself is distasteful and obscure to many readers." I agree. It reminds me of a story where a guy was spending time with a prostitute, and when he was confronted by his church leaders, he turned his back on them while speaking (Luke 7:44). How rude.—*Alex Beattie, Orrville, Ohio*

So now the scapegoat is the music group the Grateful Dead and their fans, Deadheads. I work every summer eradicating non-native plants in Yosemite National Park with a volunteer from San Jose. She is a lifelong Deadhead. She does not consume alcohol or drugs, is happily married, has been an unpaid legal guardian to two nonfamily members, volunteers three months every year for environmental restoration, serves as a conflict resolution monitor at Grateful Dead events and loves bears. She holds a theology of life. We have congregations which tolerate a theology of death (military service and capital punishment). Which is the more embarrassing complicity?—*Richard Wiebe, Clovis, Calif.*

Music's charms

The May 12 issue was very special because of the "Singing Celebrations" articles. It is proper for the church to acknowledge the great contributions that Mary Oyer has made to church music—and the end is not yet. It was my privilege to work with her in church music conferences and in the production of *The Mennonite Hymnal.* May God bless her well.

It is also proper to congratulate Todd Hershberger and Ross Kauffman and their Goshen (Ind.) College colleagues for organizing the Hymnal-a-thon. What a blessed occasion to sing all stanzas of all hymns in *Hymnal: A Worship Book.* I hope this church-music fete will spread to our other church institutions and our congregations.—*J. Mark Stauffer, Chambersburg, Pa.*

Abandoned by God?

"A Narrow Escape" (April 28) raises a troubling question for me. After describing how the Knox family escaped even as many others were weakened, trampled and died in the Bhopal, India, gas leak, the author says of the Knoxes that the "Lord had provided, had not forsaken them." Did the Lord then abandon all those other human beings? Would he do that? If the Knoxes had not survived, would that have meant they were abandoned by God? *—Kathy Boling, West Liberty, Ohio*

Playing the fool

I was shocked when I saw the letter from Monty Ledford (May 12). His hatred toward homosexual men jumped out of the page at me. His statement regarding male homosexuals' sexuality (straight men's, too, for that matter) was offensive. I am even more saddened that *The Mennonite* would even publish such a letter. I thought you included letters that were short and to the point and did not show prejudice or hatred toward a group of people. These kinds of letters do not educate, enlighten or inspire.—*Emily North, Takoma Park, Md.*

Given Monty Ledford's apparent commitment to a literal interpretation of Scripture, I'm puzzled that he would publicly call some of us fools. In Matthew 5:22, Jesus says, "But whoever shall say 'Thou fool' shall be in danger of hellfire."—*Clif Kenagy, Albany, Ore.*

Throwing stones

Our church has long prided herself on the ability to confront in love and compassion those who err and then restore them to fellowship. Forgiveness and compassion are difficult gifts to give, but that is where true healing begins. It is curious that as *The Mennonite* searches for faithfulness, readers seek to stone individuals or whole groups of fellow Mennonites. I find it interesting that as our denominations move toward unity, healing and peace, the letters convey a move in the opposite direction. *—Betty Lou Green, Fogelsville, Pa.*

Indonesian Mennonites survive

Some leave homes, lose possessions in uprising

Indonesian Mennonites have so far weathered the storm resulting in the ouster of President Suharto, but they did not emerged unscathed, according to reports from the island country.

Some Mennonites of Chinese ethnicity have left their homes and lost possessions to the riots. Indonesians of Chinese descent have been targets during the recent upheaval, and two of the three Indonesian Mennonite synods are predominantly Chinese. But no lives have been lost, and no Mennonite church buildings have been attacked.

Indonesia was racked by rioting, looting and destruction of property leading up to Suharto's decision to step down on May 21. Some 500 people were reported killed in the uprising, which was mostly concentrated on the island of Java.

Mennonite Central Committee workers on Java who went to other islands during the uprisings have already returned to their assignments or are expected to do so shortly. MCC has nine workers assigned to Java. One family remained in the capital city of Jakarta out of a "sense of solidarity" with the Indonesians with whom they work, says Ray Brubacher, MCC's overseas program director.

He says the reason for the relocation was fear that instability in military leadership could lead to civil war.

Suharto's resignation has been greeted as good news by Indonesian Mennonites. "This is what people are asking for," says Paulus Widjaja, a member of the GKMI synod and a student at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

At Goshen (Ind.) College prior to Suharto's resignation, nine Indonesian students led a campus rally in support of the reform movement.—*Rich Preheim*

Indonesia is home to three synods of Mennonites. The largest, the GITJ, is predominantly Javanese in ethnicity and has some 46,000 members in 73 congregations, according to Mennonite World Conference statistics. The GKMI and the JKI are comprised of Indonesians of Chinese ethnicity. The GKMI has 13,000 members in 34 congregations. The JKI, which split from the GKMI, has 3,500 members in 52 congregations.

Eastern Mennonite Missions administrator to make August return to mission field

SALUNGA, Pa.—After 18 years as an Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) administrator, David W. Shenk is headed back to the mission field.

"I've always known that God's call on my life is to share the good news with as many people as possible," he says.

He will have that opportunity in August at Lithuania Christian Fund College in Klaipeda, Lithuania, where he will be academic dean. His wife, Grace, will serve as counselor for LCFC's 400 students and 60 faculty members. The Shenks will be serving with EMM.

"In a country of 3.5 million people, there are only 8,000 evangelical Christians," Shenk says. "Only 20 percent of the students enrolling in the college are professing Christians, so faith is a continual matter of debate and discussion. The tone of the school is evangelical, so we see this very much as a pioneer movement."

Because Christian faculty and teachers at the school are open to sharing their faith, as many as 80 percent of the students are Christians by the time they graduate.

Shenk, EMM's Home Ministries director from 1980 to 1986 and Overseas Ministries director from 1987 to 1998, anticipates relating to emerging churches in a region that shook off communism in the early 1990s. Shenk will serve as a resource person on Islam and missions—topics on which he has written books—for the churches and institutes in the region. One of LCFC's goals is to provide faculty as resource people for the churches.

Grace and David Shenk

Under Shenk's leadership, EMM increased its focus on unreached peoples. "Oftentimes, I have prayed, 'Lord, how can it be that to me is this grace given to have the privilege of serving the church in its mission in this way?' " says Shenk, who has served 37 years with EMM. "We see our involvement in Lithuania as a continuation of these commitments. A different arena, but as part of EMM."
—*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

We see this very much as a pioneer movement.

—David Shenk

The congregational connection

Arizona church stresses links with MVS unit

Members of Shalom Community Church, a Mennonite congregation in Ann Arbor, Mich., were among those who took it on the chin—and the shoulders, back, legs, arms, face and elsewhere—when the Ku Klux Klan held a May 9 rally in Ann Arbor. Past rallies had turned into violent confrontations with anti-KKK protesters and police. So this year, a community volunteer Peace Team was organized to try to maintain order. "We were putting ourselves at risk for the sake of peace," said Shalom pastor Kathy Neufeld Dunn, one of the Peace Team coordinators. While team members intervened in confrontations to rescue both KKK and anti-KKK demonstrators, they were also punched, grabbed and insulted. "They played an absolutely despicable role as unpaid agents for the police," said one anti-KKK demonstrator. Some Peace Team members were almost crushed when anti-KKK protestors rushed a chain-link fence surrounding the rally. *—The Ann Arbor News*

TUCSON, Ariz.—When Tina Schlabach began work on a job description in preparation for joining the pastoral team at Shalom Mennonite Fellowship 18 months ago, she noticed there was no strong pastoral link between the congregation and the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit.

Schlabach now spends one evening a week with the MVS unit. They share a meal, deal with household issues, do conflict resolution as necessary and have a time of personal check-in and prayer.

"MVS permeates the church," Schlabach says. "The whole culture of voluntary service has stamped itself on our church. Service is a deeply held value."

The Tucson unit, now a program of the Commission on Home Ministries and Mennonite Board of Missions, was begun by MBM in 1969 in part to help support a Mennonite presence in Tucson. That led to the formation of the Shalom congregation six years later. A significant portion of Shalom's membership consists of people who came to Tucson as MVS workers and stayed.

Shalom's MVS committee, which normally meets once a month, has been putting in considerably more time in the past half-year, Schlabach says. "We have been looking hard at our vision for Tucson MVS and working on a vision statement, working with [MVS associate director] Saul Murcia," she says.

"This is a cutting edge for us. Now we are waiting to see where the winds might blow."

Schlabach points to Community Home Repair Projects of Arizona, which provides a significant number of MVS placements and is directed by a Shalom member, as an avenue for more church involvement in outreach. Most people in Tucson know CHRPA simply as "the Mennonites."

"CHRPA is not a Shalom ministry budget-wise, but it is people-wise, and it's a community connection," Schlabach says.

CHRPA, then called Mennonite Home Repair, was created in 1982 to help low-income people but also to provide service opportunities for the Mennonite senior citizens who spent the winter months in the area's warmer climate. Placed with MBM's Service Opportunities for Older Persons program, they swell the unit size each winter. In fact, voluntary service in Tuscon was a winter-only program from 1984 to 1988.

GCMC/MBM photo by Melanie Zuercher

Tucson, Ariz., Mennonite Voluntary Service workers Dennis Huxman (left) and Peter Baer work on a cooling unit on a house roof. The two men serve with Community Home Repair Projects of Arizona. Shalom Mennonite Fellowship of Tucson is taking steps to develop stronger links with the MVS unit.

"I would like to see CHRPA become a more intentional ministry of Shalom," says CHRPA executive director Gary Bahman. "What we do needs to go beyond fixing houses to impact people's lives on a deeper, more profound level."

Other unit members serve at a clinic for people without health insurance, a homeless shelter and a social service agency. But Schlabach has dreams for more. "We would like to work on developing MVS placements for the neighborhood around the church," she says.

Murcia likes the direction Shalom and the unit are moving. "I have had a vision for several years of seeing the local congregation with more autonomy in placing MVSers," he says. "Now Shalom has budgeted money to help pay a local program coordinator next year. That's a new thing for them. It will make the [local program coordinator] much more accountable to the congregation and motivate more involvement from the church."

The congregation's examination of the role of MVS in its life has planted some "baby seedling ideas," Schlabach says. Now they wait to see how they grow.—*Melanie Zuercher for GCMC and MBM news services*

CMC delegates to vote on homosexuality plans

WINNIPEG—Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) delegates this summer will vote on calls for continuing dialogue on homosexuality and for restructuring the conference as part of the integration process.

The CMC General Board, meeting April 24-25, approved sending the resolutions to the delegates, who will gather July 8-11 in Stratford, Ont.

The board was spurred to bring two resolutions following responses to last summer's decision by South Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church to publicly welcome homosexuals as members. One resolution discourages expelling congregations and upholds official church positions that homosexual sex is a sin. The resolution urges "that we continue dialogue on those matters wherein we disagree."

A second, related resolution sets guidelines for dealing with disagreements among congregations or area conferences. "Only as a last recourse of actions, and when all attempts to resolve differences and find reconciliation have failed, would separation of congregations and conference be considered," the resolution says.

Delegates will also vote on a proposal for CMC and Northwest Mennonite Conference, a CMC associate member area conference, to "engage in the transformation of the current structures" as part of the one-denomination, two-country model proposed for the integrated General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church.

If approved, specific recommendations would be brought to the 1999 CMC delegate sessions.—*Aiden Schlichting Enns of* Canadian Mennonite

MCC worker killed in Bolivia bus accident

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Krista Hunt Ausland, 26, was killed May 20 in a bus accident in Bolivia. She and her husband, Aaron, had been serving in the country since last November.

The Auslands were taking an early morning bus from their assignment location in Bañada de la Cruz to Santa Cruz to meet with other MCC workers. The bus missed a curve and went over an embankment. The Auslands were separated in the accident, and Krista was killed, along with four Bolivians. Aaron sustained some injuries and may require minor surgery.

The Auslands, who would have celebrated their third anniversary on May 26, were from Tacoma, Wash., where they attended Tacoma Open Bible Church. In Bolivia, Krista worked as a promoter with women's groups and in support of rural libraries.

Says Linda Shelly, MCC Latin America/ Carribean program director, "Krista approached her assignment with great enthusiasm."
—*MCC News Service*

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According to their numbers

A survey shows church members united in beliefs and commitment but uninformed about integration.

by Melanie Zuercher

A survey of 1,237 telephone interviews was conducted between Jan. 24 and Feb. 28 to gather the thoughts and feelings of U.S. and Canadian General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church members as the two groups continue to integrate. The survey was part of the work of a GC-MC Integration Committee communications task force. The survey, conducted by Parkwood Research Associates of Allentown, Pa., covered issues of integration, Mennonite identity, church structures, local congregations and communication.

Sifting through a 150-page report of survey results is no small task. But Dave Linscheid and Ron Byler have done it, and they did not hesitate when asked for their most significant finding.

The survey, conducted earlier this year by an Allentown, Pa., research firm, polled church members about mission, vision and identity as part of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC)-Mennonite Church (MC) integration process. The survey found that 54 percent of GC and MC members in the United States and Canada were unaware of either the merger or the reasons for it.

"What clearly stands out the most is the degree to which people don't know why we're integrating," says Linscheid, GC communications director.

Byler, MC associate general secretary, called the numbers alarming. "Responding to this challenge is fundamental to the work of the Integration Committee and the general boards," he says. "We need to be working at communicating the why of integration."

Twenty-two percent of those polled were not aware of integration. Of those who were aware, 41 percent could not identify a reason for the merger. The survey highlighted five segments of the church that could benefit from specially targeted integration communication efforts: women; Canadian Mennonites; younger Mennonites, particularly those with children; people of color; and MC members in the eastern United States.

In addition to integration, the survey asked questions about Mennonite identity issues, members' relationships to and perceptions about church structures, local congregational issues and church communication efforts, including periodicals, vision statement and confession of faith.

The survey's bottom line was to serve the GC-MC integration process. But it also revealed a variety of encouraging insights, such as commonalities in belief and practice.

"I was pleasantly surprised by how much unity there was, in spite of all the ways the survey had of probing our differences," Linscheid says. "We are Christians first, Mennonites second. Also, some of the core values we hoped would come through from open-ended questions did, like following Jesus in everyday life, centrality of the Bible, peacemaking."

The "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective" and "Vision: Healing and Hope" statement also got positive responses. "People feel like these are good, sound, unifying expressions of our beliefs," Linscheid says.

But some survey categories also offered interesting differences. "For example, the value of 'following Jesus in everyday life' ranked higher among rural members while 'peacemaking' was higher among urban members," Byler says. "Also 'being part of a Mennonite congregation' was more important to the urban respondents than to the rural, which probably reflects the difference between being surrounded by many other Mennonites and being part of a smaller group in an urban setting."

Selected survey findings, pp. 9-10

The survey also showed that younger people, ages 18 to 34, were more concerned about evangelism and outreach than were older Mennonites, who placed more weight on preserving identity and on Mennonite tensions with secular culture. "It raises a question that we come back to time and time again: how to reach out to others and also maintain our identity of community," Byler says.

"The survey shows that both MCs and GCs share a common belief structure and are strongly committed to the church," he says. "But without addressing the need for improved communication, we can't assume we'll develop a unified sense of identity."

Melanie Zuercher is news service editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

And more numbers

0 percent (rounded off) of all members receive church information from computer web sites.

6 percent of all members say patriotism is one of the most important Mennonite values. Sixteen percent said it was not at all a Mennonite value.

19 percent of all members attended eight or more church board/committee meetings the previous year.

What people said

A sampling of the Mennonite church member survey

All numbers in percentages

How important to you is being part of a Mennonite congregation?

VERY **64%** FAIRLY **27%**
NOT VERY **8%** DON'T KNOW/REFUSED **1%**

Importance of religion by denomination

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT
MC/GC	91	8	1
BAPTIST	83	14	3
CATHOLIC	67	27	6
LUTHERAN	67	28	5
METHODIST	65	29	6
PRESBYTERIAN	67	25	7

Worship attendance by denomination

	WEEKLY OR MORE	1-2 TIMES A MONTH	FEW TIMES A YEAR	NEVER
MC/GC	90	6	3	0
BAPTIST	58	20	17	4
CATHOLIC	59	15	21	5
LUTHERAN	47	22	27	4
METHODIST	48	15	28	9
PRESBYTERIAN	48	14	29	9

Importance ratings of values as Mennonite (top 6)

	ONE OF MOST IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL MENNONITE	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
FOLLOWING JESUS IN EVERYDAY LIFE	62	35	2	0	0	1
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS	62	35	3	0	0	0
ADHERING TO THE BIBLE	49	43	6	1	0	1
INVITING OTHERS TO FOLLOW JESUS	43	45	10	1	1	0
HELPING OTHERS IN TIME OF NEED	43	53	3	0	0	1
PEACEMAKING	40	48	11	1	0	0

Have you heard of the integration plans for the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church?

YES **78%**
NO **20%**
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED **2%**

Mennonites' primary struggles today (top 4)

		AGE						PEOPLE OF		
	TOTAL	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	WHITE	COLOR	U.S.	CANADA
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	17	18	10	14	21	23	17	15	16	21
IDENTITY	13	14	16	15	16	9	14	10	13	15
SIMPLICITY	12	11	10	12	18	11	12	4	12	11
SECULARIZATION	10	10	11	10	6	12	10	13	11	7

Perceived reasons for integration (top 4)

	TOTAL	MC	GC	DUAL	U.S.	CANADA
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	41	44	44	36	38	54
UNITY	34	35	29	37	37	21
EFFICIENCY	14	9	18	21	13	16
BIGGER	12	11	13	13	13	8

What do you like most about your congregation?

COMMUNITY **50%**
SUPPORT **12%**
WORSHIP **8%**

What could your congregation be doing better?

EVANGELISM/OUTREACH **28%**
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED **19%**
COMMUNITY **10%**

Integration concerns (top 4)

	TOTAL	MC	GC	DUAL	U.S.	CANADA
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	49	48	52	48	45	62
BELIEFS/FAITH ISSUES	15	18	10	11	17	8
BIGNESS/COMMUNITY	5	4	6	6	5	5
NOTHING	5	4	5	5	4	5

28 percent of all members came from other denominations. And 27 percent of them came from other Mennonite/Anabaptist denominations.

35 percent of members ages 18 to 34 say their congregations could do better evangelism and outreach, the most of any demographic group.

38 percent of members who are people of color attend worship services more than once a week, the most of any demographic group.

What people said

continued from page 9

All numbers in percentages

Perceptions of the Mennonite Church as liberal or conservative

						AGE							
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	WHITE	PEOPLE OF COLOR	MC	GC	DUAL
FAR TOO CONSERVATIVE	4	4	5	8	3	3	2	4	4	11	4	4	6
SOMEWHAT TOO CONSERVATIVE	17	18	16	20	22	21	17	6	17	22	13	22	24
JUST ABOUT RIGHT	53	54	51	48	54	53	60	54	53	46	54	54	48
SOMEWHAT TOO LIBERAL	15	15	14	14	14	9	13	21	16	6	18	12	10
FAR TOO LIBERAL	3	2	3	2	1	5	1	3	3	0	3	2	2
DON'T KNOW / REFUSED	9	7	11	8	7	9	6	12	8	15	9	7	10

Have you seen or heard about the "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective"?

YES **72%**
NO **23%**
DON'T KNOW **5%**
REFUSED **1%**

How well does the confession of faith reflect Mennonite beliefs?

VERY WELL **63%**
MODERATELY WELL **32%**
NOT VERY WELL **2%**
NOT AT ALL WELL **0%**
DON'T KNOW **3%**

Perceptions of the General Conference Mennonite Church as liberal or conservative

						AGE							
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	WHITE	PEOPLE OF COLOR	MC	GC	DUAL
FAR TOO CONSERVATIVE	2	1	3	2	1	4	2	1	2	6	2	3	2
SOMEWHAT TOO CONSERVATIVE	13	13	12	17	15	15	12	5	12	26	11	13	19
JUST ABOUT RIGHT	49	51	48	47	48	49	52	52	50	45	44	57	54
SOMEWHAT TOO LIBERAL	19	22	17	20	25	14	17	17	20	7	22	16	12
FAR TOO LIBERAL	5	5	5	6	3	4	3	8	5	0	6	4	3
DON'T KNOW / REFUSED	12	8	16	8	8	14	14	17	12	15	15	7	10

Tensions between church and secular world

Most members of my congregation feel LITTLE tension between the church and the secular world: TODAY **19%** 1989 **25%**

Most members of my congregation feel SOME tension between the church and the secular world: TODAY **62%** 1989 **60%**

Most members of my congregation feel A LOT of tension between the church and the secular world: TODAY **15%** 1989 **12%**

Concerns about specific issues (top 9)

	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	MC	GC	DUAL
HOMOSEXUALITY	48	54	41	47	56	37
ABORTION	17	16	17	19	17	2
NO ISSUE	14	6	22	15	8	16
ROLE OF WOMEN	10	9	12	10	17	3
LOSS OF PACIFISM	8	10	7	9	7	11
MARRIAGE / DIVORCE / REMARRIAGE	8	0	16	10	4	0
DON'T KNOW / REFUSED	8	10	7	7	6	20
TOO PEACE-MINDED / TOO ACTIVIST	6	6	5	7	4	5
ADHERENCE TO BIBLE IN GENERAL	5	3	6	4	4	7

Have you seen or heard about the "Vision: Healing and Hope" statement?

YES **38%**
NO **56%**
DON'T KNOW **6%**

How well does the statement reflect Mennonite mission in the world today?

VERY WELL **60%**
MODERATELY WELL **32%**
NOT VERY WELL **4%**
NOT AT ALL WELL **0%**
DON'T KNOW **3%**

45 percent of U.S. households do not receive any denominational periodicals.

50 percent of members in cities of 25,000 or more rank peacemaking as among the most important Mennonite values.

52 percent of members over age 65 would not switch to another demination.

60 percent of all members did not teach Sunday school in the previous year.

The pink raincoat

Journey of a transplanted Army brat

by Lauren McKinney

I sat in the green Army school bus while the other riders bounded in and chatted with the driver in *Hogan's Heroes* German. I sat gripping my plaid lunch box. "A lunch box! Check it out! She's got a lunch box!" cried a huge boy, to the guffaws of his friends. I turned my head to look out the window, so no one could see my blushing face, which was not easy with a pixie haircut.

I jammed my feet as far under the seat in front of me as possible in order to hide my white socks and saddle shoes. No one here wore white socks. You were a "faggot" if you wore them. I looked faggot up in the dictionary when I got home and saw that it meant "a bundle of sticks." It seemed an odd thing to call someone, but then everything at Mannheim High School was strange.

The girls and the boys had long stringy hair, and everyone wore mangy jeans that dragged on the ground. The more faded, the better. My plaid dress with the prim white collar had, therefore, marked me as an oddity, so I hadn't taken my pink raincoat off all day. All during the 26-mile bus ride back home, I wondered what it would take for me to survive the rest of seventh grade.

Although surviving that year involved systematically deceiving my mother by changing into jeans as soon as I got to school, I did survive. As indeed most of us do survive the perils of early adolescence. My family had just moved from Augusta, Ga., to Worms, Germany, and I had to attend a U.S. Army high school in Mannheim that included grades 7-12.

The '60s counterculture, having bypassed Augusta, was sweeping Mannheim High School with its trappings and watered-down anti-establishment attitudes: beads, moccasins, patchouli, peace signs (I bought a peace pendant for $2 at the Officers Club), anything with a suede fringe. Making out in public, writing graffiti anywhere you please, talking a lot about sex even though you'd never even been to "first base."

The Army brat's life is a series of such awakenings. Every couple of years, the Army brat must adjust to new slang, new status symbols, new subcultures and must negotiate afresh the minefields of American childhood: playgrounds, cafeterias, breezeways and restrooms.

Who is the bully who decides who gets to spin on the merry-go-round first? How can I appear cool and nonchalant when I'm carrying my lunch tray, frantically looking for someone I know who won't mind me sitting with them? Which is the girls' room where girls smoke and sit so you have to walk over their legs, and which is the girls' room where I'll be left alone and can even read on the toilet if I want to?

At the same time, the Army brat learns to mine the possibilities of the future. Maybe next year I will be popular. … Finally, the Army brat can move out of survival mode into the role of observer and free spirit. It took me about 30 years. And yet now, through many twists of God's quirky plan, I'm with people who have roots, roots that are well watered, that go deep into the ground, roots that are strong.

My father and both my grandfathers went to West Point and served in the armed forces because they believed it was their duty and an honorable profession. I am certain that they know now, more than anyone, the prideful folly of war. But they worked so hard at war, spent years at war and war games. In following orders they lived thousands of miles away from their families or took the families with them—to the Philippines, Mexico, Panama.

A silence surrounds much of what my father actually did in Vietnam or on his other assignments. For me as a child, the U.S. Army was a distant god who moved us around like pieces in a mad chess game with an obscure but noble strategy.

Since those days, a greater God has made herself known to me, and she has more of a sense of humor than the U.S. Army does—and more compassion. God has given me time for roots to begin growing and a more lasting sense of who I am. The mortified 11-year-old in the pink raincoat is still a part of me, as are all the selves that I have confronted, suppressed and reinvented during my life. As Walt Whitman said, "I contain multitudes."

And as for those of you who feel too deeply rooted, give yourself permission to change, to take on new shapes, to move. God will give you light and water in other places, too. Perhaps a little transplanting is good for the soul.

Lauren McKinney is assistant professor of English at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

EMU photo

God has given me time for roots to begin growing and a more lasting sense of who I am.

—Lauren McKinney

This article is reprinted with permission from EMU's *Crossroads* (Winter 1997).

Events

Twenty-fifth anniversary of the ordination of Emma Richards, first woman ordained to pastoral ministry in the Mennonite Church, June 20, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Iowa-Nebraska, North Central and Northern District conferences joint annual meetings, Aug. 6-9, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Births

Beck, Miriam Alderfer, March 2, to Kerry and Mary Beth (Alderfer) Beck, West Hartford, Vt.

Gehman, Caroline Elise, March 14, to Jonathan and Terri (Yoder) Gehman, Weyers Cave, Va.

Giagnocavo, Alexander Isaac, Dec. 17, 1997, received for adoption March 13, by Alan and Carole (Roth) Giagnocavo, Lancaster, Pa.

Kerdeman, Katelyn Rose, April 27, to Michael and Sarah (Hershey) Kerdeman, Peach Bottom, Pa.

Lapp, Aiden Miller, May 7, to Jonathan and Renee (Miller) Lapp, Harrisonburg, Va.

Loganbill, Reid Wyeth, March 5, to Joe and Marilyn (Waltner) Loganbill, Newton, Kan.

Longacre, Olyvia Pearl, May 5, to Cory and Linda (Miller) Longacre, Souderton, Pa.

Murphy, Aubrianna Lauren, April 13, to April (Roberts) and Logan Murphy, Lowville, N.Y.

Rittenhouse, Laura Marie, April 22, to Ronda (Schlabach) and Steve Rittenhouse, Harrisonburg, Va.

Skinner, Claire Elizabeth, April 27, to Gregg and Lisa (Dintaman) Skinner, Bend, Texas.

Steiner, Anna Marie, April 24, to Doug and Ellen (Kehl) Lehman Steiner, West Liberty, Ohio.

Widrick, Isaac Daniel, April 20, to Dawn (Roggie) and Paul Widrick, Copenhagen, N.Y.

Winters, Darren James, April 3, to Eugene and Kelly (Shaffer) Winters, Lancaster, Pa.

Marriages

Bailey/Yoder: Jessica Bailey, Sarasota, Fla., and Alton Yoder, Tryon, N.C., March 28, by James Miller II.

Bane/Brunk: Matt Bane, Newport News, Va., and Heidi Brunk, Newport News, May 9, by Edwin Bontrager.

Cook/Frederick: Paul Cook, Toronto, and Marci Frederick, Toronto, March 7, by Doris Weber.

Derck/Nafziger: Kristen Derck, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Loren Nafziger, Parkesburg, Pa., May 1, by Richard Buckwalter.

Glasgo/Lehman: Katherine Glasgo, Rittman, Ohio, and Bryce Lehman, Orrville, Ohio, May 2, by Richard Ross.

Hayes/Juhnke: Cassie Hayes, Topeka, Kan., and Darin Juhnke, Topeka, May 30, by Roger Neufeld Smith.

Kozel/Steiner: Nick Kozel, Harrisonburg, Va., and Deanna Steiner, Harrisonburg, May 2, by Nick Kozel.

Landis/Yost: Ora Landis, Strasburg, Pa., and Jennifer Yost, Quarryville, Pa., May 2, by John Meck and Richard Buckwalter.

Layman/Strauss: Heidi Layman, Newport News, Va., and Charles Strauss Jr., Newport News, April 25, by Dave Shirkey.

Deaths

Bender, Ruth E., 96, Goshen, Ind., died May 3. Burial: May 5 at Goshen, by Nancy Kauffmann and Firman Gingerich.

Buller, Hilda L. Ediger, 83, Buhler, Kan., died April 22. Survivors: husband, William "Bill"; children Jody Miller, Sue Lemke; two grandchildren. Burial: April 25 at Buhler, Kan., by Bob Dalke.

Detweiler, Donald M., 58, Telford, Pa., died April 27 of heart failure from heart surgery. Survivors: wife, Cora; children Dawn Delp, Denise Alderfer; seven grandchildren; parents, Norman and Sallie Detweiler. Burial: May 1 at Telford by Michael Derstine.

Friesen, Dave, 81, Hesston, Kan., died May 7 of Parkinson's disease. Survivors: wife, Rubena; children Jim, Janet Regier; four grandchildren. Burial: May 11 at Inman, Kan., by Dean Linsenmeyer.

Johnson, Daniel Lee, 63, Scottdale, Pa., died May 10. Survivors: wife, Sandra; son Daniel Lee Jr. Memorial service: May 31 at Scottdale by Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz.

Leis, Gertrude Miller Kipfer, 91, Sarasota, Fla., died March 27. Survivors: children Marge Christner, Laverne Miller, Earl Miller; 13 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 30 at Sarasota by Barry Loop.

Moyer, Frances Apple, 87, Lansdale, Pa., died May 5. Survivors: husband, Edward; son, Jay; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: May 8 at Perkasie, Pa., by Truman Brunk, Benjamin Stutzman and David Derstine.

Oyer, John S., 73, Goshen, Ind., died May 4. Survivors: wife, Carol; children Rebecca Meyers, Kathryn, Sarah Cerceo, Timothy; three grandchildren. Burial: May 7 at Goshen by Firman Gingerich.

Wiand, C. Edward, 79, Mifflinburg, Pa., died May 3. Survivors: wife, Anna; children Robert, Glenn, Dean, Joel, Norma Wilson, Jeanne Ebersole; 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: May 6 at Middleburg, Pa., by Sam Yoder, David Weaver and Norman Kolb.

Wildman, Joyce Anetta, 58, Quakertown, Pa., died April 27 of multiple injuries from an auto accident. Survivors: children Joanna, Barry Vaugh, David Beckford; five grandchildren. Burial: May 1 at Doylestown, Pa., by Duane Bishop.

Woolner, Royden Jacob, 82, Waterloo, Ont., died May 5. Survivors: son Paul; two grandchildren. Burial: May 8 at Kitchener, Ont., by Rudy Baergen.

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Classifieds

Menno House, a hospitality ministry of Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, seeks individual or married couple for 25 hour/week ***manager*** position for guest/resident house in New York City. Begin August 1998. Low rent and salary. Live in Christian community. Meet guests from around the world.

Inquiries: Menno House, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003.

Softball teams, church softball tournament: ***5 games guaranteed.*** July 3-5, 1998, Dublin, Ohio. Call Ron Headings, 614-873-8859.

Bluffton College seeks applicants for a one-year appointment in ***criminal justice and sociology*** (with the possibility of extension) beginning fall 1998. Ph.D. preferred; ABD candidates are also invited to apply. The successful candidate must be academically prepared to teach at least the following courses: Introduction to Juvenile Justice; Law, Justice and Society; Social Problems, and one section of Introduction to Sociology each quarter.

Bluffton College is a growing, Mennonite-related college. It welcomes applications from qualified individuals who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Send letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three letters of references and official transcripts to Joetta H. Schlabach, special assistant to the dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Review of applications will begin June 15 and continue until an appointment is made. EOE.

Additional information: http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.

Eastern Mennonite Missions Discipleship Ministries Department seeks ***assistant program administrator.*** Begins July 1998. Responsibilities include: assist with program administration, develop systems for international and urban young adult participation, administer teams.

Contact Keith Blank at 717-898-2251 before June 30.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***graphics designer / image coordinator.*** Begins September 1. Responsibilities include conceptualize and design print, display and Internet communications. Requirements: two years training in graphic design, DTP experience, team player.

Contact Allen Brubaker, 717-898-2251, or allenb@emm.org.

Goshen College seeks a ***director of employer relations*** to coordinate outreach to potential employers. The individual will report to the director of career services and relate closely to the associate academic dean. Responsibilities: three-fourths time with employer development relationships and one-fourth time to off-campus volunteer and service-learning programs for college students. Work includes research, telephone solicitation and site visits. Employer outreach includes formation of employer alliances, developing and administering regular events such as employer student recruitment, employer visits to classrooms and student visits to employer sites. On-campus activities include working with campus personnel to integrate employer alliances into the fundamental mission and educational philosophy of the curriculum. Examples include the enhancement of present internship programs, senior seminars, present service-learning efforts and the exploration of further curricular connections. Statewide travel required.

Preferred qualifications: A master's degree in student services, student personnel, human resources, management, marketing, or related fields along with database management skills, experience in Windows95 and knowledge of web-based technology.

Minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree required with expertise in program development and a commitment to the Goshen College mission and to student development philosophy. Previous marketing, job development or related experience is also required. Organization, detail orientation and the ability to work as a strong team player are musts. Also important are well-developed writing, presentation, marketing and networking skills, coupled with the interpersonal skills for relating to employers, faculty, students and alumni.

Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Send resume and cover letter to Director of Human Resources, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; or fax 219-535-7060.

Application review will be between Aug. 15 and Sept. 15, 1998. The starting date is Oct. 1, 1998, or as soon as possible after this date.

Holly Grove Christian School is now accepting applications for the following full-time positions for 1998-99:

High school upper-level math / science instructor: Courses would include precalculus, physics and chemistry.

Physical education instructor: Duties include elementary P.E. classes, secondary P.E. and some coaching.

High school social studies instructor: Courses would include world history, American history, American government / Maryland history, world cultures, economics.

Holly Grove Christian School is a nondenominational K-12 school affiliated with Holly Grove Mennonite Church and a member of ACSI. It is located on Maryland's Eastern Shore and has been in existence for 25 years. HGCS does not discriminate in its hiring practices on the basis of race, color or national/ethnic origin.

Please call the school, 410-957-0222, for an application weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. Eastern time, or call the principal, Mr. David Bess, 410-957-3841.

Attention war tax resisters: Now you can avoid war taxes without IRS harassment. ***For free information,*** send SASE to: Yoder's Tax Information, 10630 Hiser's Lane, Broadway, VA 22815.

Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa., is expanding its ministerial team by adding a ***full-time youth minister.*** Interested people should send resume to Search Committee, Franconia Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 26, Franconia, PA 18924-0026.

Question #12:

"Why are migration and martyrdom part of their identity?"

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For brochure, call The Hermitage, 616-244-8696.

Classifieds

Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a ***science/Bible instructor.*** Teaching responsibilities include physical science, general biology, advanced biology, chemistry and one Bible class. Salary range $19,750-$29,850.

Send resume to Freeman Academy, attn. Larry Horner, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029.

Mennonite Mutual Aid is seeking a ***promotional writer*** who will be responsible for writing and editing materials for various areas of the organization. Qualified candidates will have a four-year degree in communications, English or related field, plus four years' professional writing experience or six years' professional writing experience. Other preferred qualifications include project management skills, innovative thinking, effective communication skills, deadline sensitive, and prior writing experience for insurance and/or financial products. MMA offers a competitive salary, excellent benefits and a desirable work environment. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply.

Send fax or resume to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 219-533-5264.

Mt. Pleasant Christian School, Chesapeake, Va., has a ***kindergarten*** teaching position open, beginning August 1998. To apply, contact Kathy Silsley, principal, at 757-482-9557 (phone and fax).

Tel Hai Retirement Community is seeking a full-time ***chaplain*** to provide religious and/or spiritual counseling and guidance to residents and employees. Conduct regularly scheduled worship services and visit residents during times of hospitalization. A bachelor's degree in psychology, religion or sociology and Divinity degree preferred. Experience in pastoring or counseling required. Experience in long-term care or hospital setting preferred. Competitive salary and benefit program.

Submit resume and salary requirements to: Human Resources Department, Tel Hai Retirement Community, P.O. Box 190, Honey Brook, PA 19344. EOE M/F/V/D

Eastern Mennonite High School announces open positions for 1998-99: ***natural science*** (second semester), ***instrumental music, intensive individualized instructor, media center coordinator.***

Contact J. David Yoder, 540-432-4502.

Greencroft, Inc., a retirement community sponsored by Mennonite Health Services, is seeking a ***vice president of operations.*** The position reports to the president and CEO and provides executive leadership for the day-to-day operations of the Goshen, Ind., campus. Qualified candidates should have experience in retirement community operations management; graduate studies are desirable.

Send resume with salary history and appropriate references to Tim Croyle, SPHR, director of human resources, Greencroft Inc., P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46527-0819; 219-537-4038; fax 219-537-4067.

The Hermitage: ***Pastoral sabbaticals.*** Quiet, companionship, library, the rolling hills of southern Michigan. Call The Hermitage, 616-244-8696.

Classified advertising space is available in *The Mennonite* to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, with a minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

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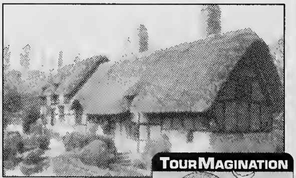

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Bethel Mennonite Church, rural Inman, Kan., seeks a ***pastor.*** Average Sunday attendance is about 240. Candidates should submit resume, letter of interest or inquiries to Chris Weaver, search committee chair, 348 Arrowhead Road, Inman, KS 67546; 316-585-6907.

Bluffton College seeks applicants for the position of ***admissions counselor for out-of-state students.*** This is a full-time, 12-month position. The successful candidate will be a self-motivated person with outstanding interpersonal and group communication skills, and possess strong organizational ability, a commitment to the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. A bachelor's degree is required.

Duties and responsibilities include coordination of all recruitment activities for out of state students; extensive travel during the fall and spring visiting high schools, churches, college fairs and other church-related functions including camps; conducting campus interviews and tours with prospective students; other responsibilities as assigned by the dean of admissions. Position begins on or before September 1.

Send resume and cover letter by June 15 to: Michael Hieronimus, Dean of Admissions, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817.

Sarasota Christian School (grades K-12; enrollment 460) is currently accepting applications for the 1998-99 school year for the following positions: ***athletic director, media center specialist,*** and teachers for ***kindergarten, Spanish (K-12) and middle school.***

To request an application, contact Jean Martin, K-8 principal, or Eugene Miller, administrator, Sarasota Christian School, 5415 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232; 941-371-6481.

Service Adventure, an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2-month service-learning program for young adults ages 17-20, is seeking ***leaders*** for units in Norristown, Pa.; Johnstown, Pa.; Albuquerque, N.M.; Lethbridge, Alta.; and South Bend, Ind. Leadership experience, interest in young adults, spiritual discernment and conflict resolution skills are desired. Minimum age 24. Two-year term. Positions are fully supported. Terms begin August 1998.

Information: Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, 219-294-7523; email Kent@mbm.org.

COLLEGE CHAPLAIN

Conrad Grebel College invites applications for a part-time Chaplain (50%) effective July 1999. The College will add additional responsibilities toward a full-time position depending on the applicant's training and interests.

Conrad Grebel College is a small, Mennonite liberal arts College affiliated with the University of Waterloo. The College has a very active, exciting, energetic, and creative student development and religious life program. The chapel program serves students from diverse backgrounds and faculties at the University of Waterloo. The Chaplain serves students in residence as well as associate students (students not in residence who make Grebel their home base while at the University).

Candidates must have the minimum of an M.Div. degree and some pastoral or chaplaincy experience. Preference will be given to candidates with a doctoral degree or near the completion of such a degree. Candidates should be familiar with and accept the Anabaptist-Mennonite theological perspective of the College.

Please send letter of application and resume, along with names, addresses, and phone numbers of three referees to:

John E. Toews,
President
Conrad Grebel College
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G6
Phone: (519) 885-0220, ext. 237
Fax: (519) 885-0014

Closing date for Applications: August 14, 1998

Power looks different from on top

by George Lehman

I have always been fascinated by the story of Jesus' healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-25). Why did it take two touches for the healing to occur? Was something blocking the man from seeing clearly? This passage comes shortly after Jesus talks about those who "have eyes but do not see." A lesson I derive from these passages is that people who are in the position of power in any relationship are likely to understand that relationship differently from those with lesser power in the relationship. When we have the power in a relationship, we may be like the blind man who saw "trees walking around."

In the early 1970s, I was a young (and I suspect brash) program administrator on the staff of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. A colleague from Canada was talking about his frustration that denominational structures were dominated by a U.S. agenda. I told him he was overly sensitive. Instead of walking away from me, this good man had the patience to listen to my point of view and explain for what must have been the 10th time that when the General Conference, which was composed of U.S. and Canadian churches, spent time debating whether to send a letter to the U.S. Congress about the war in Vietnam, he was irritated because that did not seem like an appropriate agenda for a multinational church. I suggested that all Mennonites should be concerned about the war. When he suggested that perhaps we should spend major time at General Conference sessions talking about legislation affecting Native people in Canada, I said that was a Canadian issue that should be discussed at the Canadian Conference.

Eventually it dawned on me that, as a member of the larger, more powerful nation in this relationship, I saw events differently from Canadians. I doubt Menno Wiebe even recalls this discussion, but I recall it clearly. Over the years I have silently thanked him dozens of times for his patient tutelage.

A few years later, my wife and I were involved with one of the experimental intentional communities forming across the Mennonite church at that time. At one point in the life of that congregation, a pair of leaders from a more established intentional community made a visit to our community in Kansas. These two leaders from a more powerful congregation gave strong direction to our church. That direction felt painful and unfair to me. Years later I talked about the incident with one of the people in power in that situation, and he acknowledged he and his colleagues had run roughshod over us and a number of others, even though their intentions were good. That acknowledgment was wonderfully healing.

I see a similar statement in the April 7 issue of *The Mennonite* by Richard Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions about treatment of African-American churches by program administrators. It is a wonderful gift from God when we can see the way our biased perspective has affected others and can ask for and receive forgiveness.

It is a wonderful gift from God when we can see the way our biased perspective has affected others and can ask for and receive forgiveness.

I wish I could say that having been on both sides of power relationships I now see things clearly. I teach business at Bluffton (Ohio) College. But sometimes I forget that the teacher-student relationship is an unequal power relationship.

Last year a couple of students mentioned in evaluations that they would be devastated if I ever treated them as rudely as I had treated Bill (not his real name). Bill was a good student whom I appreciated and enjoyed having in my classes. One day in class we were doing a role play of a situation, and Bill gave a wrong answer. In the role I was playing, I joked that Bill was not one of the better students, when in fact it was clear that he was. I had nearly forgotten the incident.

I looked up Bill and asked if he remembered the incident. He had no trouble remembering and he asked me what I meant. I said I was being silly and should not have done it and that I respected his abilities so much that it had not even occurred to me that he or the class would not understand my joke. I was wrong. I failed once again to understand how being in a position of relative power could lead to misunderstanding.

We are all at times the powerful and at times the ones with less power. I pray that I and all of us Mennonites in the process of uniting can learn how much our positions of power in relationships distort our understanding of the positions of those with less power.

George Lehman teaches business at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

Years ago the Alban Institute published a study of the level of satisfaction with relationships within pastoral staffs of large congregations. One conclusion was that the lead pastor almost always thought the relationships among the staff were more satisfactory than the other pastoral staff thought they were.
—George Lehman

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Rich Preheim

Integration: who's responsible?

For members of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC), we are on the cusp of a new beginning.

OK, so that is trite and obvious. After all, we are in the process of forming a new denomination. That, by definition, is a new beginning. But that could just be organizational with little impact on the person in the pew. Not much change except for the name on some office.

But our new beginning needs to be more than that. That's because we are having an identity crisis of sorts. The recent survey of GC and MC members (pp. 8-10), conducted as part of the integration process, gives us the proverbial good-news, bad-news report. Across the board, we are pretty united on what we believe and are active in our local congregations. But we are rather ambivalent about our relationships with the denomination.

Church members surveyed were asked to rate from 1 to 10 their ties to the area conference, national and binational church levels. On average, respondents placed themselves almost smack-dab in the middle, between 5 and 6. Not cold, but not exactly hot, either. While 60 percent of respondents say their households receive a denominational periodical, only 35 percent say they receive denominational information from those periodicals. That could mean a lot of things, including a lack of concern about what is happening in the broader church—items covered in the denominational periodicals.

There even seems to be some confusion about what denomination members belong to. In the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, which 10 years ago became the first dual-affiliated area conference, some members of former MC churches say they now refer to themselves as GC members.

What all this ambivalence, apathy and confusion means, the survey concludes, is that "simply integrating will not likely create a unified sense of identity or calling for members of the new Mennonite Church."

These are not new issues for the two merging groups. Many observers in recent decades have noted the loss of Mennonite identity in the face of growing secularization, urbanization, diversity and localism. The integration process has only highighted these issues—and highlighted the importance of addressing them.

And that's our challenge for our new beginning. But exactly whose challenge?

The survey places much of the responsibility on the leaders of the integration process. The results seem to lend more credence to those who have long called for a stronger articulation of the vision and mission behind integration. Of those church members polled who are aware of the impending merger, 41 percent could not identify a reason for it. As a direct result of the survey's findings, the Integration Committee has approved a specific plan for communicating integration and related issues to the church. A mission statement is also in process. But with varying degrees of success, church leaders for years have been addressing these sorts of concerns—such as decreased giving, the state of the peace position, the new confession of faith and the new vision statement.

Yet we also profess to be a priesthood of all believers. That means we are each able to participate in the discernment of God's leading for the body of believers. To do so requires being reasonably informed about the life of the church. Not only are we able to do so, we are obligated. Anabaptism is very democratic.

More than 90 percent of church members say being a Mennonite is important. But as our identity is in flux during this time of transition, it is up to all of us—the people in the pew as well as the church leaders—to faithfully find our way to becoming the new Mennonite Church. If a new beginning is important to us, we all must take ownership in it.—*rp*

It is up to all of us to faithfully find our way to becoming the new Mennonite Church.

Numbers don't lie, but . . .

One integration survey result which has been met with some skepticism is that 90 percent of Mennonites attend church services once a week or more often. But doubts may be justified, say C. Kirk Hadaway and Penny Long Marler in the May 6 *Christian Century.* They say they have conducted their own studies and found actual church attendance to be about half the rate reported by national public opinion polls. Hadaway and Marler say people aren't necessarily lying but include church events other than worship, such as weddings, committee meetings and choir practices.—*rp*

the Mennonite

June 9, 1998

partners

in two countrie

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Mennonite identity

4 Oregon school shooting from up close
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10 Living in a nation that won't dip its flag
16 Why we need a two-country structure

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Congregational discipline

Without wanting to enter fully into the debate of congregational discipline, I have two remarks to Marlin E. Thomas' letter (May 12): First, he says, "there was no such thing as conferences in biblical times." That is perhaps true in the contemporary sense of the word, but it is clear that there were intercongregational relationships and decision-making. Acts 15 is clearly an example of decisions that were made and accepted on a level beyond the local Jerusalem church.

Secondly, "not even at the Council of Nicea ... were heretical churches banned from the fellowship of churches." While not being sure how the Nicean model would be directly applicable to our situation (or whether it would be desirable), from a purely historical point of view the statement is not totally correct. The doctrinal formulations of Nicea are followed by 20 different canons, many of which include disciplinary measures or decisions that were applicable to all the churches involved.

There are no perfect ecclesiastical structures, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a single model for interchurch relationships in the New Testament. Nevertheless, extreme congregationalism would appear to me more as a manifestation of our modern individualism than as something that is found in the New Testament period or in the early church or in the notion of koinonia proposed by Larry Miller ("The Other Half of Koinonia," May 5). The Schleitheim meeting of 1527 is at least one example where 16th-century Anabaptism did not function only on the basis of autonomous local congregations.—*Neal Blough, Saint Maurice, France*

Mennonite hesitation

George O'Reilly states, "I sometimes question if Mennonites are not revealing a tendency toward seeing themselves a little too highly in comparison with others" (Readers Say, May 12). Granted that any and all of us may have pharisaic tendencies at times, my experience has been nearly the opposite. Too often we as Mennonites feel that everyone else has something better than we, and we run here and there looking for something to replace what we have. We look elsewhere for Sunday school helps and youth material when other denominations acknowledge that we have some of the best.

We hesitate to say we are Mennonite for fear it carries some kind of stigma. Yet I find so often that when I identify myself as a Mennonite, people are eager to know more about us. This is especially true in Central America, where people know about the work of Mennonite Central Committee and where people are desperately looking for a way to further peace. This is often somewhat embarrassing to me, and I try to explain that we too have warts and struggle with life's issues just like people everywhere. But it is also gratifying to see how others respond to what we profess to stand for.—*Robert O. Epp, Henderson, Neb.*

Seasoned chicken

Thanks for the editorial "Too Chicken to Climb the Hill" (May 12). J. Lorne Peachey spoke as a seasoned leader—and bicyclist. I agree: A wise leader will help keep vision focused on the work Jesus calls us to. My interpretation of that call is to be invitational, telling others about Jesus. Acts 15, the familiar text used to analyze how the early church handled controversy, serves to illustrate the point. Good news stories were first on the agenda, not divisive issues. The stories of changed lives laid the groundwork for resolving controversy.—*Larry Hauder, Boise, Idaho*

Flavor of the gospel

"A Fresh Breath of Life" (May 5) was a breath of fresh air. Although the struggle to achieve parity will likely continue for some time, evangelization by colonization is evidence that there is at least some attempt to achieve it, both culturally and economically. This stands in stark contrast to the Puritan style in this country in the 17th century. Widely hailed as the bearers of the gospel to the New World, the Puritans' own absence of respect for the Native Americans led to two of the bloodiest wars the United States has ever been involved in. One would hope that this current experiment in Costa Rica would retain a flavor much more in tune with the gospel as delivered by Jesus. —*Loren T. Helmuth, Abbeville, S.C.*

Missing foundation

I feel that the new *The Mennonite* will contribute greatly to the spiritual and social welfare of the Christian faith. But I do miss the slogan on the cover of the previous *The Mennonite:* "For no foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).—*Abel Epp, McAllen, Texas*

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

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Cover photo by James Carroll

say readers say

History of harvesting

Jim Egli evidently has little knowledge of Mennonite history, and his knowledge and understanding of basic biblical teachings is also faulty ("Plentiful Harvest but Few Workers," May 5). Since when can a Christian repent for any sins other than his own? How can we repent for anything our forefathers did? There is much they did that fills me with admiration and gratitude. Many books tell the story of Swiss Mennonites having considerable evangelistic impact even while living at 7,000 feet of elevation. If Jim Egli were under the threat of reprisals, I'm sure he wouldn't try to plant any churches, especially since he doesn't have any invitation from groups of people who want to be "planted." Egli also doesn't consider the fact that Mennonites in the United States made no attempt to evangelize the Native Americans or others around them until long after Mennonite missionaries from Russia (including my grandfather) did mission work in Indonesia in collaboration with German and Dutch Mennonites.—*G. Henry Schmitt, San Bernardino, Calif.*

Purity over unity

Without arguing for or against homosexuality, may I suggest a serious study of Galatians 5 and other passages that deal with the fruits of the Spirit? It's my observation that we are so committed to achieving church purity, of which the Bible says very little or nothing, that in the process we commit the very serious sin of disunity, of which the Bible says a great deal. Should not our energies be put into seeking ways for those who in good conscience disagree to work together?—*D. Lowell Nissley, Sarasota, Fla.*

Close-up view of a tragedy

Pastor, chaplain respond to Oregon school shooting

SPRINGFIELD, Ore.—On the morning of May 21, Gayle Sheller was driving from her home in Springfield to her office in neighboring Eugene, where she pastors Eugene Mennonite Church, when she heard the news on the radio: There had been a shooting at Springfield High School.

"I just turned around and went back to Springfield," Sheller says.

She drove straight to McKenzie-Willamette Hospital, where she has served as a volunteer chaplain and where about half the shooting victims were taken.

An expelled Springfield student had opened fire at the school, allegedly killing two and wounding some two dozen more. The student's parents had been killed earlier.

While many saw this latest school shooting from afar through the media's lenses, Sheller and McKenzie-Willamette chaplain Brenda Yoder, one of Sheller's parishioners and an ordained Mennonite minister, saw it frightfully close up.

Sheller was among the number of pastors and counselors who showed up at the hospital after word of the shooting got out. They visited with victims and their families, helped people find where they needed to go in the hospital, protected them from the media, "whatever needed to be done … trying to make the place a secure sanctuary," Sheller says.

She and Yoder say those who gathered at the hospital were dazed and dumbfounded by the shooting and very quiet. "People were just hanging on to each other," Sheller says

While she worked face-to-face with victims, families and friends in the wake of a devastating, emotionally charged incident, Yoder found herself turning off her feelings. She did not do any counseling, something she normally does when tragedies occur, she says. Instead, she spent the morning and into the afternoon coordinating the hospital's efforts of getting information and support to the victims' loved ones who gathered at McKenzie-Willamette after the shooting.

"I just got real functional because I knew I had to be in my business-type role," Yoder says.

She didn't sleep well the first several nights afterwards—"I've got too much going on to process"—but a week later she says she was starting to recuperate. "I noticed yesterday I was feeling the emotional side," she says.

But Yoder says she is receiving much support. "I'm so well cared for; people hug me and ask how I'm doing," she says. "The next day [after the shooting] two ministers dropped by to see how I was doing, and, of course, many called."

Nobody in Eugene Mennonite Church was injured in the shooting, but, Sheller says, "everyone in the community is one or two people removed from knowing someone involved."

For Springfield and Eugene, that makes the tragedy different from the rash of previous school shootings. "There was no way to depersonalize it," Sheller says. "It was really in our face."

The community, meanwhile, is still in a state of shock. Yoder says she sees that among the hospital staff, some who had children involved in the shooting. "I think everything is a little more tender or sad," she says.—*Rich Preheim*

> There was no way to depersonalize it. It was really in our face.
>
> —*Gayle Sheller*

Wait for the movie

Looking for a scapegoat? Forget big business, unscrupulous politicos and, of course, the commies. For James Huston, it's those quiet-in-the-land, nonresistant-yet-subversive Mennonites. Huston, a former Navy pilot, has written *Balance of Power,* a novel about what happens when Indonesians hijack an American freighter, kill the crew and the president refuses to retaliate. Among other events, the speaker of the house moves for impeachment because the guy in the White House is "a closet Mennonite and pacifist," acccording to *Publishers Weekly,* which calls the book "lackluster." Disney has the film rights.

MCC photo by Tony Siemens

MCC work is a stretch

Mennonite Central Committee physical therapist Teena Wagner stretches a child's polio-damaged legs in Mzimpofu, Swaziland, while Wagner's colleague Thabsile Nene (right) works with another child. Wagner serves at St. Joseph's Mission, which teaches academic subjects and job skills to people with disabilities. MCC has provided workers to St. Joseph's for the past 20 years. Wagner, from New Hamburg, Ont., is in Swaziland with Serving and Learning Together, MCC's one-year young-adult program.

Conference keeps Atlanta church on suspension for time being

APOPKA, Fla.—Southeast Conference delegates voted May 16 to keep Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship under suspension, delaying a decision on the congregation's future status until a special conference session later this year. AMF's practice of admitting noncelibate homosexuals into membership landed the congregation a one-year suspension a year ago.

Delegates voted 40-16 for the recommendation to delay action. It was drawn up by the Conference Council just hours before the conference's semiannual meeting, held at Iglesia Cristiana Ebenezer.

"Southeast Conference is seeking a better way to deal with this issue, a way that won't reject people because they're different from the mainstream, a way that will include them in the circle," said Ivan Zimmerman of Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.

AMF members and their supporters shed tears of joy, thankful that more time had been given to talk and learn to know each other. In a closing time of prayer, AMF member Elaine Swartzendruber said: "My faith has been restored. ... Thank you for the effort that is being made to bring understanding and healing to our church, this church we love so much."

Many cited a statement by Duane Yoder, pastor of Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, as a turning point in the pre-vote discussion.

"While it is important that I reaffirm and uphold the conference position, it is crucial that we need to take more time for discussion and education and the opportunity to relate on a more personal level with AMF," Yoder said. "I will not vote for expulsion of AMF."—*Audrey A. Metz for* Mennonite Weekly Review

Integration Committee ponders next steps after one-denomination, two-country decision

CHICAGO—The General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) general boards' approval of a one-denomination, two-country model for the new merged church has left the Integration Committee (IC) wondering how to proceed next. And the committee's May 15-16 meeting did not offer much resolution or clarity.

As a result of the boards' watershed decision, the IC has been assigned the task of developing a plan for "intentional partnership" between the U.S. and Canadian bodies. Two country committees will be created to work on the two national structures.

Some meeting participants said the general boards' decision means the elimination of a binational structure, to be replaced by various cooperative arrangements as needed by the separate country structures. "Partnership is a radical new way to conceive of denomination," said GC general secretary Jim Schrag.

He added that church members will also come to view the country structures—not just the binational structure—as the denomination.

But others at the meeting were not ready to leave the partnership initiative with the country committees. "We need binational structures to make partnerships endure," said committee member Don Steelberg.

He argued for a small binational board not made up of members from country boards.

Discussion will continue at the IC's September meeting, when it will hear from the country committees. The IC is then scheduled to report to the GC and MC general boards in November.

The IC also wrestled with the issue of membership in the new church. Will all current GC and MC congregations be grandfathered in? Or will congregations be screened for membership in the new church? Those questions are in the hands of a membership committee authorized by the joint general boards. IC co-chair John C. Murray said the IC "can give counsel on process ... but shouldn't seek to tell the membership committee what it should conclude."

The issue is particularly troublesome in the context of some congregations accepting noncelibate homosexuals as members. Schrag suggested the membership committee "seek to depolarize and broaden the middle ground enough for the new denomination to get started."

In other business, the IC approved the hiring of Glenn Fretz of Toronto to develop a new visual identity program, including a logo, for the new Mennonite Church over the next year.

An executive staff team, made of the GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada general secretaries and treasurers, will continue to meet monthly to address integration issues and concerns.—*Ron Rempel for* The Mennonite *and* Canadian Mennonite

We need binational structures to make partnerships endure.

—Don Steelberg

Ohio church has job-training vision

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Located in a high-unemployment area of Columbus, Agora Christian Fellowship has started a job-training program. It will work with current agencies and use the skills of church members to serve as volunteer trainers. Philip Stauffer, who has a master's degree in economics and has worked in poverty and job-training programs, helps lead Agora's program. The congregation is a church plant of Ohio Conference.

—Ohio Evangel

Don't look for Ukrainian Mennonites' return to Chortitza, GC mission leader says

When in Zaporozhye, Ukraine, earlier this year, Peter Rempel visited several older people with some connection to the Mennonite church.

"I saw a woman in her 80s, lying in a tiny room in a cold building," says Rempel, Europe secretary for the Commission on Overseas Mission. "She was shaking with Parkinson's disease and cold. . . . She had only one thin blanket. She looked up at us and wailed over and over, 'Why can't I die?' "

The Ukrainian government fails to provide medical care or social welfare. Rempel committed to helping pay someone to come in for half days during the week to care for the woman. —*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

NEWTON, Kan.—The Ukrainian city of Zaporozhye is home to a growing Mennonite congregation and is located in the area of the former Mennonite colony of Chortitza. The former presents a problem; the latter, some observers say, could be the solution.

Not so, says Peter Rempel, Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) secretary for Europe.

"Various visitors from North America have suggested that the site of the church building for the former Chortitza colony should be reacquired," says Rempel, who visited the Ukraine earlier this year.

The Chortitza building has either been expanded to or replaced by a two-story facility housing a cultural center. Ukrainian law calls for returning to original owners property confiscated when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union.

Rempel sees a number of reasons the Zaporozhye congregation won't return to Chortitza: The congregation lacks influence, the Chortitza site is not centrally located, and the cultural center needs extensive renovation and maintenance.

The Zaporozhye congregation, made up of people of Mennonite and German ethnic descent, has been meeting since 1993. There are 50 baptized members, and Sunday-morning attendance averages 70 to 80 people. Sunday school and two weekday Bible study groups have been started. COM workers have offered pastoral leadership to the congregation.

The congregation meets for worship in a school assembly hall near the center of the city, a convenient location for public transportation. But the hall's capacity is 90 people, only slightly more than current attendance, and the second-floor location is problematic for older members.

"This is a group of people who are more acculturated, with no long church history of not allowing women to exercise their gifts in the church, and they are not necessarily opposed to a woman in leadership," Rempel says.

Chortitza, settled in 1789, was the first Mennonite settlement in Russia. The Mennonite Brethren church was born out of a revival in the colony village of Einlage. Chortitza became a battleground following the outbreak of the Communist Revolution, and nearly 1,500 Mennonites were exiled from the colony by the communists prior to World War II. Occupying German forces evacuated Chortitza—about 35,000 people—in 1943.—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

Grad's grin

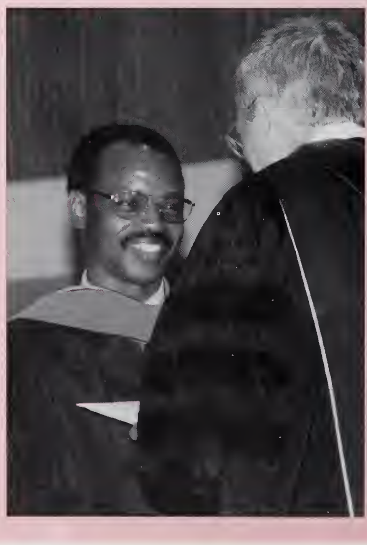

Photo by Mary E. Klassen

Jasper Ndaborlor is all smiles as he receives his diploma from Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Ndaborlor, a former Pentecostal pastor in Liberia, will return to his home country to establish peace study centers. AMBS graduated 41 students on May 22. In other commencements that weekend, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., graduated 135; Goshen (Ind.) College graduated 220; and Bluffton (Ohio) College graduated a record 228 seniors, plus seven master's degree students.

MBM worker wins grant for intercontinental education

JOKKMOKK, Sweden—Mennonite Board of Missions worker Tom Rutschman has received a $25,000 grant from the Swedish Ministry of Education to take 12 students and 10 adults to Peru in August.

Rutschman, who serves in Sweden with the Free Church of Jokkmokk, three years ago took 25 students and adults to Peru after winning a contest sponsored by KLM Airlines. The group helped build a day-care center in the southern part of the country.

Since then, the students and a local support group have been raising money to see the center completed. Although the building won't be finished when the group arrives in August, they expect to see the facility at least partially in use.

Also while in Peru, the group will spend time with street children in Lima and make a film about their lives from the children's perspective.—*MBM News Service*

Florida congregation enters garage business

TAMPA, Fla.—College Hill Mennonite Church in Tampa has purchased a local service station and garage to serve not only customers but also those who work there.

The neighborhood suffers from unemployment rates of more than 50 percent. The plan is for the station, part of a congregational job-training project, to have four apprentices. The business will be directed by College Hill member Devon Stone, who had been a mechanic at the station and previously managed a garage in Jamaica.

The purchase price was $98,000. The project has received gifts or grants totaling $25,000 from individuals, Southeast Conference and Mennonite Board of Missions.—*MBM News Service*

MCC responding to Sudan famine

WINNIPEG—A shipment of six container-loads of relief supplies from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has arrived in East Africa to be distributed among famine victims in southern Sudan. About 400,000 in one region are affected by the crisis, caused by civil war and drought.

The supplies, valued at $303,412 (U.S.), include 31 tons of meat, 17 tons of clothing and 35 tons of soap. MCC is also participating in two grain shipments valued at $480,000 (U.S.). The grain will be purchased in East Africa for shipment to Sudan. MCC is providing an additional $20,000 (U.S.) worth of seeds. —*MCC News Service*

EMU to host sixth annual Bach Festival

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The sixth annual Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival, to be held on the Eastern Mennonite University campus June 14-21, will celebrate "Bach and Music of the Americas."

"Much of the music to be heard on this summer's program demonstrates the continuing influence of Bach's imagination on the work of composers in the Western Hemisphere," says Kenneth Nafziger, festival director and conductor.

Three prominent composers whose work will be performed during the week will be present: Adolphus Hailstork of Norfolk, Va.; Alice Parker of Boston; and Lawrence Wolfe, principal bass for the Boston Pops Orchestra. In addition to the smorgasbord of music, events will include films and a poetry reading.

MEDA program celebrates fifth anniversary

LANCASTER, Pa.—A Lancaster-based Mennonite Economic Development Associates job-training program celebrated its fifth anniversary April 16 by graduating 16 budding entrepreneurs. It was the program's 15th graduating class.

Called ASSETS, or A Service for Self-Employed Training and Support, the program provides business training, mentoring and loans to low- and moderate-income people wishing to start or expand small businesses. Similar programs operate in Norristown, Pa., and Fresno, Calif.—*MEDA News Service*

Influential Mennonite Brethren leader dies at 91

FRESNO, Calif.—J.B. Toews, perhaps the most influential Mennonite Brethren leader of the 20th century, died May 9 at the age of 91. Born in poverty in Russia's Molotschna colony, Toews became a college and seminary professor and president, mission board administrator, pastor, historian, author and spiritual leader of the MB church.

"I would describe him as a magnetic force, a giant redwood, a statesman, a prophet, a powerful preacher and teacher," Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (MBBS) president Henry J. Schmidt said at Toews' memorial service in Fresno.

Toews was president at MBBS for eight years and also served at Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, Sask.; Freeman (S.D.) Junior College; and Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

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Lingering embarrassment

Mennonite self-identities in the United States and Canada

by Sam Steiner

Lingering embarrassment and stubborn assertiveness. These phrases contrast Mennonite self-identities in the United States and Canada. They derive from many factors: variant Mennonite immigration histories, disproportionate national and denominational population bases, and different political cultures.

These disparities are not rooted in our Christian faith or in Mennonite doctrine; they derive from the temporal realities within which we live in North America. Nonetheless our expressions of faith have been influenced by these real disparities. They have complicated integration discussions between the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church since 1989 and, at the GC and MC general boards meeting in North Newton, Kan., in March, have plunged them in "national" directions lamented by many Mennonite observers.

In 1983, in Bethlehem, Pa., delegates approved a statement on "inter-Mennonite cooperation in North America." By 1989, in Normal, Ill., another joint MC-GC delegate session approved a "recommendation on exploring MC-GC integration."

The 1989 resolution committed both conferences to explore models of denominational structure "at the area conference, national and binational levels." Since the beginning of the MC-GC integration conversations, Canadian Mennonite leaders have insisted that the new denomination will require a national conference in Canada. Already in 1989, other U.S. voices raised concern that integration would "result in a division between the Mennonites in U.S. and Canada." These cautions also arose in Canada, especially in the Northwest Conference of the Mennonite Church.

Most U.S. Mennonites have puzzled over what they saw as Canadian nationalism and tried to accommodate it while emphasizing a strong binational denominational identity. Canadian Mennonite leaders wondered why U.S. Mennonites failed to recognize the need for an effective forum to address U.S. issues. Although the Integration Exploration Committee (1989-1995) proposed national U.S. and Canadian structures within the new denomination, the suggestion was quietly shelved in favor of a four-regions model that identified Canada as one of those regions. This model finally passed from the scene.

U.S. Mennonites have roots in three cultural migrations. Eighteenth- and early 19th-century Swiss Mennonite and Amish immigrants shaped the "Old" Mennonite Church. Its most effective 20th-century outreach to other cultural groups has been to African-Americans and Hispanics. General Conference Mennonites welcomed Russian Mennonite immigrants in the late 19th century and undertook an outreach emphasis to Native Americans.

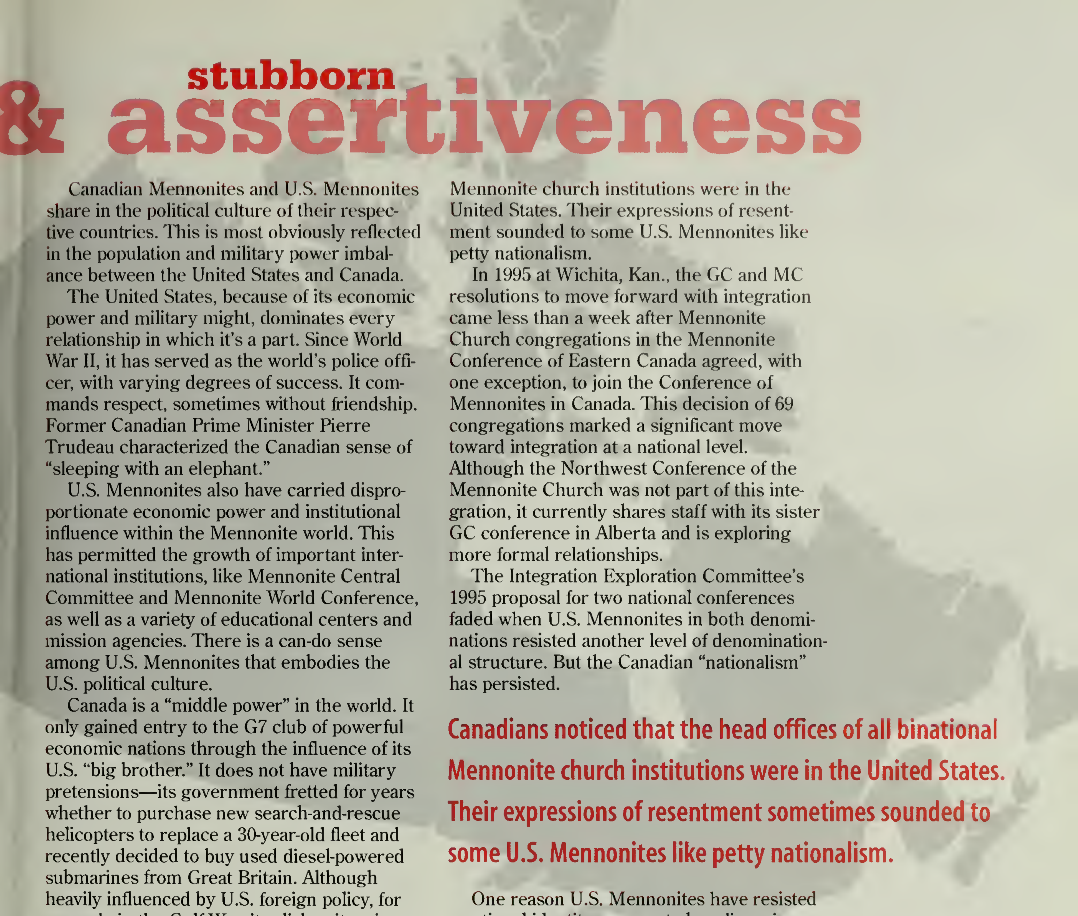
Canadian Mennonites share the same founding cultural groups. Swiss Mennonites and Amish arrived from Pennsylvania and France respectively in the early 19th century. Russian Mennonites appeared in three waves: the 1870s, 1920s and after World War II. Other Russian Mennonites traveled circuitous 20th-century migration paths to Canada via South America and Mexico. Twentieth-century outreach has extended to French-speaking Canadians, Native Canadians and to immigrant and refugee groups from Southeast Asia and Central America.

Stronger cultural residue: These distinctive histories explain a stronger cultural residue among Canadian Mennonites, including non-English languages of origin and fresher family memories of war and displacement, combined with appreciation for opportunity and freedom in Canada.

Canadian Mennonite negotiations with government for rights and privileges in military service, immigration policy and economic assistance have most often been successful. The resulting friendly feelings of Mennonites have been reciprocated by their government—segments of Canada's international development dollars have been channeled through Mennonite Central Committee Canada and government funds paid most expenses for Mennonite bicentennial celebrations in 1986.

Although U.S. Mennonites have negotiated with government for privileges in relation to military service and some educational liberties for conservative Amish and Mennonite groups, they have failed at crucial times to alter restrictive immigration policies that would have benefitted their Mennonite brothers and sisters after the Russian Revolution or World War II.

Although Canadian Mennonites will comprise only 25 percent of the new Mennonite Church, Mennonites form a significantly higher percentage of the Canadian population than in the United States. The 1991 census indicated that 6 percent of the province of Manitoba describes itself as Mennonite—much higher than similar jurisdictions in the United States. For Canadian Mennonites this has meant a larger voice and stake in their country, combined with a friendlier relationship to their government.—*Sam Steiner*



stubborn & assertiveness

Canadian Mennonites and U.S. Mennonites share in the political culture of their respective countries. This is most obviously reflected in the population and military power imbalance between the United States and Canada.

The United States, because of its economic power and military might, dominates every relationship in which it's a part. Since World War II, it has served as the world's police officer, with varying degrees of success. It commands respect, sometimes without friendship. Former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau characterized the Canadian sense of "sleeping with an elephant."

U.S. Mennonites also have carried disproportionate economic power and institutional influence within the Mennonite world. This has permitted the growth of important international institutions, like Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference, as well as a variety of educational centers and mission agencies. There is a can-do sense among U.S. Mennonites that embodies the U.S. political culture.

Canada is a "middle power" in the world. It only gained entry to the G7 club of powerful economic nations through the influence of its U.S. "big brother." It does not have military pretensions—its government fretted for years whether to purchase new search-and-rescue helicopters to replace a 30-year-old fleet and recently decided to buy used diesel-powered submarines from Great Britain. Although heavily influenced by U.S. foreign policy, for example in the Gulf War, it relishes its minor diplomatic deviations—recognition of Cuba or reopening relations with China before Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. It is comfortable with its role in the world; it is sometimes uncomfortable with its powerful neighbor.

Home mission field: Canadian Mennonites have also felt like a "middle power" in relation to their U.S. brothers and sisters. They relish their unique history but have cooperated heartily in many projects initiated by their siblings in the United States. Sometimes they've felt more like children than siblings. Early in this century, leaders in the newly formed Conference of Mennonites in Canada were irritated when GC leaders regarded Canada as their home mission field. The Canadian office of Mennonite Central Committee, when lodged in Kitchener, Ont., resented the need to send carbon copies of all correspondence to MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa. Canadians noticed that the head offices of all binational Mennonite church institutions were in the United States. Their expressions of resentment sounded to some U.S. Mennonites like petty nationalism.

In 1995 at Wichita, Kan., the GC and MC resolutions to move forward with integration came less than a week after Mennonite Church congregations in the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada agreed, with one exception, to join the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. This decision of 69 congregations marked a significant move toward integration at a national level. Although the Northwest Conference of the Mennonite Church was not part of this integration, it currently shares staff with its sister GC conference in Alberta and is exploring more formal relationships.

The Integration Exploration Committee's 1995 proposal for two national conferences faded when U.S. Mennonites in both denominations resisted another level of denominational structure. But the Canadian "nationalism" has persisted.

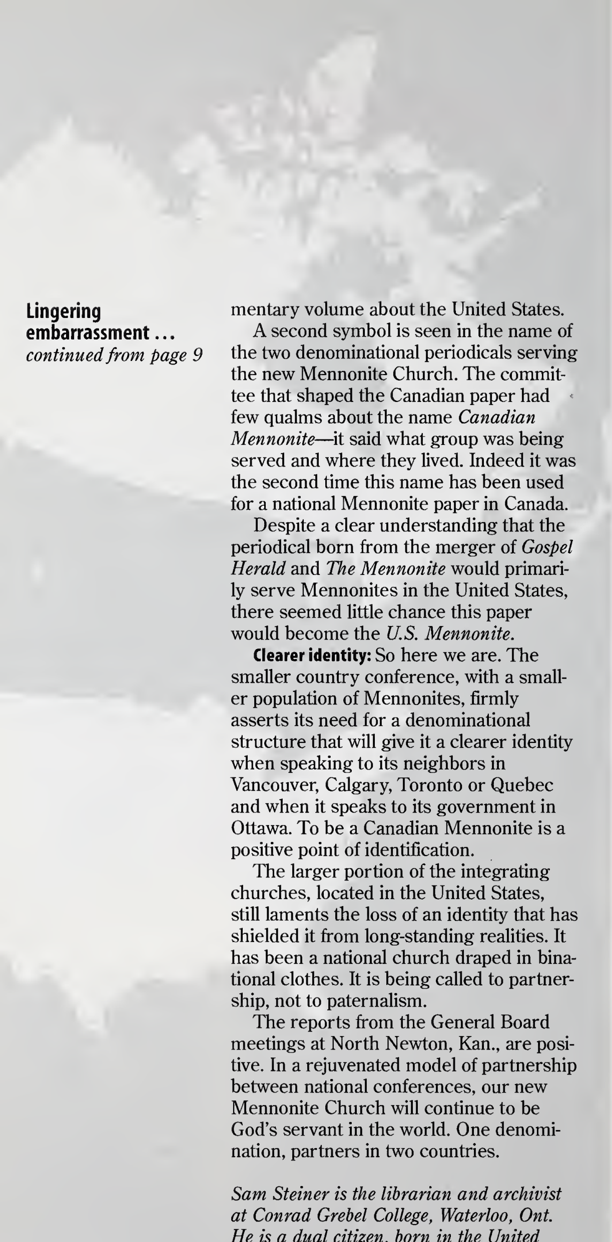
Canadians noticed that the head offices of all binational Mennonite church institutions were in the United States. Their expressions of resentment sometimes sounded to some U.S. Mennonites like petty nationalism.

One reason U.S. Mennonites have resisted a national identity appears to be a lingering embarrassment about the political culture in which their church lives. Many U.S. Mennonites are uncomfortable with some of the political decisions made by their government on the international scene. For example, was Grenada really a threat? Was the Gulf War about oil or justice? Mennonite theology is uncomfortable with America's military and economic muscle-flexing.

Two symbols of contrasting Canadian and U.S. Mennonite national self-identification come to mind. In 1990 a supplementary volume of *Mennonite Encyclopedia* was published. Ted D. Regehr contributed a lengthy analytical article about Canada. He described a tolerant relationship with the Canadian government that allowed Mennonites their own identity as part of the Canadian mosaic while welcoming Mennonite assimilation into Canadian culture. There was no article in the supple-

continued on next page

The articles by Sam Steiner and James Harder in this issue are published in cooperation with *Canadian Mennonite* and will appear in its June 8 issue as well. Like *The Mennonite*, *Canadian Mennonite* is a periodical for the integrated Mennonite Church, though it is geared toward Mennonites in the Canadian context, while *The Mennonite* is geared toward Mennonites in the U.S. context.



Lingering embarrassment ...
continued from page 9

mentary volume about the United States.

A second symbol is seen in the name of the two denominational periodicals serving the new Mennonite Church. The committee that shaped the Canadian paper had few qualms about the name *Canadian Mennonite*—it said what group was being served and where they lived. Indeed it was the second time this name has been used for a national Mennonite paper in Canada.

Despite a clear understanding that the periodical born from the merger of *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* would primarily serve Mennonites in the United States, there seemed little chance this paper would become the *U.S. Mennonite.*

Clearer identity: So here we are. The smaller country conference, with a smaller population of Mennonites, firmly asserts its need for a denominational structure that will give it a clearer identity when speaking to its neighbors in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto or Quebec and when it speaks to its government in Ottawa. To be a Canadian Mennonite is a positive point of identification.

The larger portion of the integrating churches, located in the United States, still laments the loss of an identity that has shielded it from long-standing realities. It has been a national church draped in binational clothes. It is being called to partnership, not to paternalism.

The reports from the General Board meetings at North Newton, Kan., are positive. In a rejuvenated model of partnership between national conferences, our new Mennonite Church will continue to be God's servant in the world. One denomination, partners in two countries.

Sam Steiner is the librarian and archivist at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. He is a dual citizen, born in the United States and living in Canada since 1968. He serves as chair of Mennonite Publishing Service, the publisher of Canadian Mennonite.

Being church i

A U.S. perspective on Mennonite identity

Back in January, my 7-year-old son and I were watching the telecast of the colorful opening ceremonies of the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympic Games. One by one, the world's competing national teams entered and circled the stadium, parading past the box of host country Japan's Emperor and Empress Akihito. Following international protocol as a sign of respect, the flag bearer for each team of athletes ceremoniously dipped his or her nation's flag as it passed in front of the Japanese head of state.

But when the large U.S. delegation's turn came, the Stars and Stripes alone remained vertical as it passed by the Emperor. "It's a long-standing American tradition that our nation's flag dips for no one," the announcer reminded viewers back home.

"Dad, why can't we dip our flag but everyone else can dip theirs?" asked my son. Like many children, John seems to have a knack for noticing and questioning things that don't ring true to human sensibilities. As a parent, I was on the spot to explain a particular adult value that violated a child's sense of propriety. I'm not sure whose teachable moment it was at that point.

This story describes a basic tension I experience in many ways as a Mennonite living in the United States. Many positive values are embedded in this nation's institutions and social fabric, values toward which I contribute to the best of my own efforts. But the values of a proud, dominant America, needing and destined to be the best on earth, beholden to no authority outside its own borders, are values that are inconsistent with my understanding of Christianity.

Until recently, this tension between the good and the bad parts of my national heritage was something I never needed to face within my church denomination. In other words, church was a refuge from those troublesome American ideologies.

Why? Until now, my denominational home (the General Conference Mennonite Church) has not been an American church—in fact 40 percent of its members are Canadian. It is structurally binational, requiring Canadian and U.S. members and staff to be involved in

U.S. Mennonites would do well to acknowledge the potential pitfalls of locating a national church in a secular American culture. Using political boundaries to define church offers strong challenges to Anabaptist values.

a nation that won't dip its flag

by James M. Harder

all church programs and decisions.

Since no significant national conference structure exists south of the U.S.-Canadian border, U.S. Mennonites have never been able to bring a strong national agenda to their larger church meetings, and U.S. political debates especially have been kept off the wider church docket. For good or bad, it's as if structures have forced a separation of church and state consistent with Anabaptist theology.

Now the integration process has determined that new, essentially sovereign national conferences of Mennonites will be formed in the United States and Canada. New denominational periodicals—the new *The Mennonite* for U.S. Mennonites and the new *Canadian Mennonite* for Canadian Mennonites—have already been created and are ready to report the agenda of these national conferences.

This all ensures that the category of "nation" is poised to play a much more significant role for U.S. Mennonites in coming years than it has in the past. This future will allow U.S. Mennonites to relate to each other more as an insular national body than ever before.

There may well be good reasons why we from the United States should do this—to face our national identity (the good as well as the bad) head on. But I also fear that without the former binational system of checks and balances the U.S.-Canada structures afforded, it will become more difficult in the future for U.S. Mennonites to resist as a church the "God Bless America" forces of American civil religion that otherwise surround us.

These are the same forces that dominate our cultural mindset throughout the work place, education, media and politics—forces that keep the American flag from being dipped at the Olympic Games.

This fear is not unrelated to the question of an appropriate name for the new U.S. Mennonite periodical. Its name, *The Mennonite,* may appear to some a bit assuming when compared with the name of its sister denomination's periodical to the north, *Canadian Mennonite*. Some have asked, Why not be more modest, stylistically parallel and geographically descriptive with a name like *American Mennonite*? It is a good question—one that will be revisited in multiple ways as other new, south-of-the border national structures are formed in coming months.

As a U.S. Mennonite, I am not comfortable with use of the term "American" to name the national structures or publications of the new U.S. church conference. True enough, "Canadian" seems to work fine for church structures north of the border. This may seem like a fine line to some, but I don't think "American" and "Canadian" are parallel terms as they are commonly understood in the world today. And people's understanding of a term is what counts most—especially as that term may be part of a witness to people outside the denomination.

The term "Canadian" is understood as a blend of geographical description and national identity. By comparison, in common usage the term "American" has moved beyond geographical description and identity into the realm of ideology. It often is used to signify a way of life and locus of power that many Americans feel the rest of the world would do well to follow. It is symbolized by an American flag that will be dipped to no one.

My hope is that the new national Mennonite body in the United States, when it is formed, will organize itself in ways that deliberately counter these secular cultural trends. The Mennonite Church in the United States can adopt structures that require accountability and interaction with church members outside our national borders. It can pick names and use terms that won't be misinterpreted by those who hold the term "American" in near-sacred esteem.

There are new opportunities for mission that will be afforded a church organized closer to home, along national lines. But U.S. Mennonites would do well to acknowledge the potential pitfalls of locating a national church in a secular American culture. Using political boundaries to define church offers strong challenges to Anabaptist values.

James M. Harder is associate professor of economics at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. He also serves as a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church General Board.

Dad, why can't we dip our flag but everyone else can dip theirs?

—John Harder, 7

Events

"Women's Voices: Celebrating and Developing Leadership" retreat, June 19-21, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. Sponsors: Mennonite Women and LMCC. Contact: 800-839-1021 or 724-423-2056.

Anabaptism and Postmodernity conference, Aug. 6-8, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Contact: Susan Biesecker-Mast, biesecker-mast@bluffton.edu or 419-358-3082.

Workers

Verney Unruh retired at the end of May from a pastorate at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Katherine Pitts was ordained May 31 as pastor of Salina (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Births

Amstutz, Abigail Anita and Amari Debra (twins), April 8, to Douglas and Wanda Roth Amstutz, Scottdale, Pa.

Bontrager, Hallie Nicole, April 5, to Kim (Wagler) and Neil Bontrager, Wichita, Kan.

Brubacher, Olivia Rachel, March 17, to Ben and Erin Brubacher, Stuart, Fla.

Cressman, Jasmine Renee, April 4, to Jonathan and Viola (Mitchell) Cressman, Mount Pleasant, Pa.

Eicher, Isaac Jacob, May 9, to Alan and Lisa (Wappenstein) Eicher, Leo, Ind.

Hallman, Nathan Joel, March 26, to Heidi (Tucker) and Mark Hallman, Wallenstein, Ont.

Hershberger, Allison Grace, April 26, received for adoption April 28 by Diane and J.D. Hershberger, Newton, Kan.

Hughes, Janessa Renae, May 8, to David and Sherri (Roth) Hughes, Schwenksville, Pa.

Kolb, Jonathan Noah, May 6, to Jennifer (Clark) and Jon Kolb, West Pottsgrove, Pa.

Leaman, Emily Adeline, April 7, to Philip and Ruth (Vogt) Leaman, Lancaster, Pa.

Montenegro, Celeste Aurora, May 11, to Aurora (Rincon) and Oscar Montenegro, Chicago.

Peachey, Adam Michael, April 23, to Janá (King) and Michael Peachey, Lititz, Pa.

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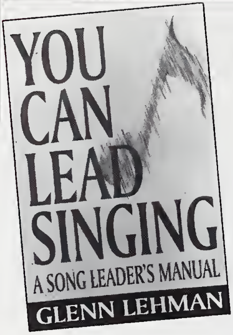

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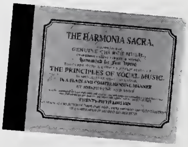

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Please send letter of application and resume, along with names, addresses, and phone numbers of three referees to:

John E. Toews,
President
Conrad Grebel College
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G6
Phone: (519) 885-0220, ext. 237
Fax: (519) 885-0014

Closing date for Applications: August 14, 1998

Rumbold, Isaiah David, April 8, to Alan and Julie Rumbold, Benson, Ill.

Sebourn, Camoron Michael, May 6, to Susan Sebourn, Bradenton, Fla.

Wheeler, Hannah Elizabeth, April 10, to David and Jana (Goering) Wheeler, Osseo, Mich.

Marriages

Bartel/Miller: Stephanie Bartel, Buhler, Kan., and Steven Miller, Hutchinson, Kan., May 3, by Elmer Miller.

Beiler/Lambert: John Beiler, Harrisonburg, Va., and Wendy Lambert, Harrisonburg, May 16, by Harvey Yoder and Shirley Yoder Brubaker.

Brenneman/King: Gwen Brenneman, Telford, Pa., and Chad King, Sugarcreek, Ohio, May 9, by Gerald Clemmer and David Greiser.

Fox/Scott: Lori Fox, Sellersville, Pa., and Jeff Scott, Blooming Glen, Pa., May 2, by David Greiser and Gerald Clemmer.

Hofstetter/Wengerd: Kevin Hofstetter, Kidron, Ohio, and Janelle Wengerd, Dalton, Ohio, May 9, by Terry Shue, Vernon Myers and Todd Martin.

Landis/Pier: Mark Landis, South Bend, Ind., and Christina Pier, South Bend, May 2, by David and Janice Yordy Sutter.

Deaths

Davidhizar, Raymond O., 80, Wakarusa, Ind., died April 23. Survivors: children Martha Timmons, Wayne; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: April 27 at Elkhart, Ind., by William Hooley.

Martin, Celinda Steckle, 90, Elmira, Ont., died May 10. Survivors: children Ronald, Lorne, Eldon, Angus, Albert; 13 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: May 13 at Hawkesville, Ont., by Don Penner.

Nafziger, Orval, 88, Archbold, Ohio, died May 2. Survivors: wife, Ada; children Barbara Aeschliman, Charlene Short, Sara; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: May 5 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Ron Guengerich and Dee Swartz.

Schweitzer, Mabel (Reinhardt) Good Martin, 96, Kouts, Ind., died May 20. Survivors: children Leila Hostetler, Madelyn Eichelberger, Roland Good; 10 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Burial: May 23 at Kouts by John Murray and Bill Beck.

Classifieds

Eastern Mennonite High School announces open positions for 1998-99: ***natural science (second semester), instrumental music, intensive individualized instructor, media center coordinator.***

Contact J. David Yoder, 540-432-4502.

Bluffton College needs ***vice president for enrollment management.*** Position opens Aug. 1, 1998. Qualifications include commitment to the mission of a Mennonite church-affiliated liberal arts college, demonstrated leadership and higher education administrative skills, and high energy in a change-oriented environment. Master's degree required, doctorate preferred. For more information, see http://www.bluffton.edu.

Submit letter of application, resume and four references to the President's Office, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. EOE. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Menno House, a hospitality ministry of Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, seeks individual or married couple for 25 hour/week ***manager*** position for guest/resident house in New York City. Begin August 1998. Low rent and salary. Live in Christian community. Meet guests from around the world.

Inquiries: Menno House, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003.

Sarasota Christian School (grades K-12; enrollment 460) is currently accepting applications for the 1998-99 school year for the following positions: ***athletic director, media center specialist,*** and teachers for ***kindergarten, Spanish (K-12) and middle school.***

To request an application, contact Jean Martin, K-8 principal, or Eugene Miller, administrator, Sarasota Christian School, 5415 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232; 941-371-6481.

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Classifieds

Bethel Mennonite Church, rural Inman, Kan., seeks a ***pastor.*** Average Sunday attendance is about 240. Candidates should submit resume, letter of interest or inquiries to Chris Weaver, search committee chair, 348 Arrowhead Road, Inman, KS 67546; 316-585-6907.

Belleville Mennonite School, Belleville, Pa., needs a ***science teacher*** (grades 8-12) beginning August 1998. Please contact Ray Baker, superintendent, at 717-935-2184 or fax 717-935-5641.

Mennonite Board of Missions: *Elkhart Offices Reunion,* Nov. 13-14, 1998, in Elkhart, Ind. For all staff, volunteers, boards/committees. Contact Kristy Yordy, 219-294-7523, or kristysy@mbm.org.

Service Adventure, an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2-month service-learning program for young adults ages 17-20, is seeking ***leaders*** for units in Norristown, Pa.; Johnstown, Pa.; Albuquerque, N.M.; Lethbridge, Alta.; and South Bend, Ind. Leadership experience, interest in young adults, spiritual discernment and conflict resolution skills are desired. Minimum age 24. Two-year term. Positions are fully supported. Terms begin August 1998.

Information: Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, 219-294-7523; email Kent@mbm.org.

Greencroft, Inc., a retirement community sponsored by Mennonite Health Services, is seeking a ***vice president of operations.*** The position reports to the president and CEO and provides executive leadership for the day-to-day operations of the Goshen, Ind., campus. Qualified candidates should have experience in retirement community operations management; graduate studies are desirable.

Send resume with salary history and appropriate references to Tim Croyle, SPHR, director of human resources, Greencroft Inc., P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46527-0819; 219-537-4038; fax 219-537-4067.

Lake Center Christian School, Hartville, Ohio, has teaching positions available 1998-99: ***kindergarten,*** 50 percent time, p.m. class; ***lower and upper elementary*** classroom positions, full-time; ***7th/8th grade,*** full-time, can choose between courses in math, language arts, social studies to make a full-time position; ***special needs coordinator,*** full-time, coordinate tutoring program, L.D. program, and all other special needs, responsible for all special needs personnel; ***computer teacher*** (3rd-8th), tech. coordinator, full-time.

If interested in an application or more information, please call Matthew McMullen, principal, 330-877-2049.

Friendship Community, Lancaster County, Pa., has ***program coordinator*** position available immediately. Responsibilities include coordinating residential program and supervising staff. Qualifications include degree in human services/education arena and two years experience with developmental disabilities.

Call Denise Herr, 717-656-2466, for more information.

Mennonite Board of Missions seeks candidates for ***vice president for internal operations*** whose function is to ensure organizational effectiveness by giving leadership to resource management and system-wide internal administrative functions. This person will manage organizational change and effective system-wide cross-divisional collaboration. Qualifications include passion for God's reconciling mission to the world, understanding of Mennonite denominational structures, and commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist belief and practice. Person must be an effective, collaborative leader with proven management capabilities, strong change-management and influence skills, ability to interpret data accurately and to conceptualize and communicate organizational trends, and ability to forge effective, productive and trusting relationships. Prior cross-cultural experience in mission or service helpful.

Anyone interested in this position, please contact Rachel L. Stoltzfus, Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515; 219-294-7523; email Rachells@MBM.org.

Conestoga Christian School (K-12, 275 students) invites applications for 1998-99 for the following positions: ***high school supervisor / teacher*** and teachers for ***middle school math / science; middle school social studies*** with athletic director responsibilities; ***grades 2-12 art;*** and ***high school Spanish.*** High school supervisor/teacher has responsibility to direct the 9-12 program; teaching may include history/civics and/or English courses.

Contact Glenna Hershberger, Conestoga Christian School 2760 Main St., Morgantown, PA 19543; 610-286-0353. Member of Lancaster Area Council of Mennonite Schools. Accredited by Association of Christian Schools International and Middle States Association.

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Send resume and cover letter by June 15 to: Michael Hieronimus, Dean of Admissions, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817.

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by Omar Eby

An oak for poverty, a dove for praise

To be sung to the tune of "A Dove on Distant Oaks"—Psalm 56: Intro

David is fleeing King Saul's troops. Sometimes he hides in the woods. Once he spends 16 months in Gath, a flea-bitten Philistine town. Psalm 56 laments this situation: His own people, having become his enemy, seek his capture; for protection he hides among his people's ancient enemy.

At sundown a dove pours out its liquid, mournful sound, the pulse of the oboe in its lower register, from a grove of distant oaks. The day's fever of activities is over. Bathed, the body is comforted with food and drink. Contentment should be the common guest at such an hour, the last light golden. But the undulating voice of the turtledove heard across the land has entered the heart and turned it restive. The dove mourning for peace or rain—and I hear just such a bird calling in my garden this wet morning—reminds David in exile that life is out of joint, even though he has committed himself to true worship and justice. The plaintive notes remind me, too, that all is not peaceful in my heart—made sore by its own vain appetites.

From the village, David looks across pasturelands to the distant grove of oaks, those venerated trees associated with the important people and events of his history. The oak symbolizes strength, endurance, a place of protection, of shade, none of which he knows, sitting in this pagan town, a guest among people who are his Lord's enemy. I, too, walk under the oaks in Burkholder's woods and hear the dove mourning a lament for peace to reign, to rain in my heart. And too often, like Kierkegaard, I feel I must resist my mind in order to believe that all is well, that all will be well.

Give me, O Lord, an oak for poverty, a dove for praise. Amen.

A song of old saints

Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.—Psalm 149:5

I think of saints as older people, those who have survived with grace and humor and wisdom what life has dealt them. Thus, this morning's verse enjoining saints to sing for joy on their beds:

You elderly people who lie all day on your beds of weakness,
if you have mental clarity and focus, sing for joy.
Confined to a bed, your spirit is not similarly tethered:
let it soar with praise to God, with prayer for the people.
"This is the glory of all his saints" (v. 9):
to praise God with their mouths.
Our unsteady steps cannot dance praise to your name.
Our palsied hands cannot strum the harp.
So how shall a tottering old saint "inflict vengeance"?
a wilted arthritic "shackle the enemy"?
With our lips we shall smite the enemy of our people.
With our pen we shall bind up the modern devils:
Those purveyors of the entertainment industry,
whose lives and art mock virtue.
Those purveyors of the business world,
whose only god sells the sweat of the poor.
Those purveyors of the academic tower,
who coldly sell scholarship for prestige, for power.
All we old saints, lying on our beds, sitting in our recliners,
shuffling the halls in soft slippers, rocking on verandas:
We shall sing to the Lord an old song:
His mercy has endured into our old age,
Yes, as the Psalmist says; God's mercy endures forever.
With the bit of mental muscle yet accorded us:
We shall shackle the hard-hearted Republican with our prayers.
We shall cripple the corrupt Democrat with letters of protest.
Praise the Lord.
O Lord, let me, when I am an old saint, still praise you, even on my bed. Amen.

Word and Spirit appears approximately once each month. Omar Eby teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Resources for faith:

- *Good Ground: Letting the Word Take Root* is a new adult curriculum co-published by Faith & Life Press and Brethren Press. To order call 800-743-2484.
- *Games That Byte: Helping Youth Evaluate Computer Games* by Cornelia Penner (Faith & Life Press, 1998, $8.95 U.S., $12.25 Cdn.) is a hands-on curriculum that helps youth evaluate the unspoken assumptions and harmful effects of violent video games. It is sponsored by the Games Project of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.
- *Pondered in Her Heart—Hannah's Book: Inside and Outside* by Elaine Sommers Rich (Wordsworth, 1998, $12.95) is a novel about an elderly woman living in a retirement home.
- *A Passion for God's Reign* by Jurgen Moltmann, Nicholas Wolterstorff and Ellen T. Curry, edited by Miroslav Volf (Eerdmans, 1998, $12) looks at theology, Christian learning and the Christian self.
- *Erasmus, the Anabaptists and the Great Commission* by Abraham Friesen (Eerdmans, 1998, $18) traces the influence of Erasmus on Swiss Anabaptists and Menno Simons.

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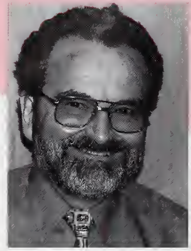

J. Lorne Peachey

Why we need a two-country structure

As the news story on page 5 notes, we now have a fairly good idea how the integrated Mennonite Church will be structured. Unless General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church delegates overturn their general boards' decisions of this past March, the new church will have a one-denomination, two-country structure. The denomination is the Mennonite Church, and it will have similar structures in the United States and Canada.

This means those of us who live south of the U.S.-Canada border will have to begin to think of ourselves as U.S. Mennonites and create a church body around that identity. Canadians are well along to having such a body—the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and CMC leaders say they are willing to change so the structures of the two groups will be similar. These two bodies—the Canadian Mennonite church and the U.S. Mennonite church—will, "by intentional partnership," according to the Integration Committee (IC) plan, form the new denomination, the Mennonite Church.

The last positive vote of a general board member was barely recorded before the reactions began. "I thought we were creating one new body out of two," I've heard. "This looks like creating two out of two."

The one-denomination, two-country structure proposal gives us a chance to put into practice, on a denominational level, what we Mennonites say we believe.

Others see the new plan as a move to a lower level of spirituality, even of unfaithfulness, one that allows the political realities to shape the church. There's also the charge the plan is a U.S. concession to Canadians' demands for more power, more authority, more control.

With some truth, one can interpret the one-denomination, two-country plan in any of these ways. But, as is always true, there are also more positive ways to look at what is being proposed.

Is it too bold, for example, to suggest that this plan may be the voice of the Spirit? The idea for a two-country structure was first proposed by the Integration Exploration Committee years before merger was approved. But after it was formed, the new Integration Committee, aware of criticism of that plan, abandoned it for one that would have divided North America into four regions. In meetings in those regions last fall and winter, reaction ranged from lukewarm to hostility, so the IC returned to the one-denomination, two-country idea. Perhaps in integration, as is so often true, the first idea turns out to be the most inspired, the one that is the best after all.

If not inspired, the one-denomination, two-country structure does at least give us a chance to practice what we preach. Anabaptist-Mennonites talk much about everyone being involved in the church, about how decentralization fits better who we are and what we believe. The closer the work of the church is to its members, the better. Here now is a chance to put those beliefs into practice in the way we structure our denomination.

This will be a challenge for those of us in the United States. We are used to thinking of ourselves as binational, even international. We pride ourselves in rising above national politics in favor of concerns for the entire globe.

But if we listen to our Canadian sisters and brothers, we will hear that in our zeal to be non-country, we often trample them in the process, using binational assemblies to do what is really country agenda. A prime example came just last July at Orlando 97 when Canadian delegates had to sit through a Mennonite Church General Assembly discussion on U.S. immigration policies. At the very least, in a one-denomination, two-country structure we can't work at national agenda under an international guise.

Certainly the new proposal brings with it a host of unanswered questions. Will the two country groups eventually drift apart into two separate denominations? Will they truly form the "intentional partnership" the plan calls for? Will decentralization work?

That there are serious questions, however, dare not scare us away from this plan. If it doesn't work, we can always name yet another restructuring committee. But for now, the one-denomination, two-country structure proposal gives us a chance to put into practice, on a denominational level, what we say we believe about power, control and authority.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

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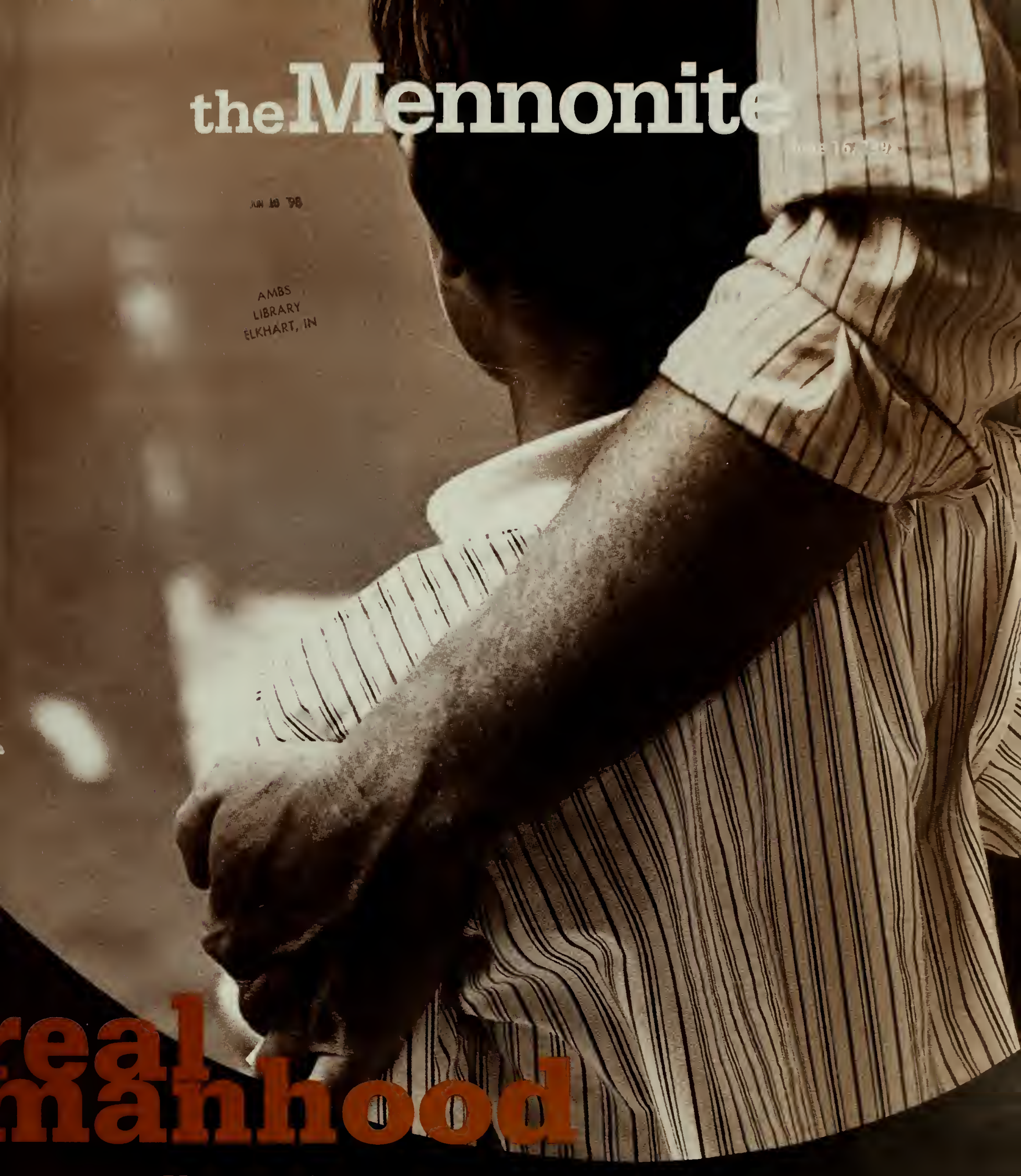

real manhood

masculine spirituality for Mennonites

4 Two countries, one youth convention
5 MCC returns to the past, looks to the future
10 Joy, awe and holy fellowship
15 The wholeness of feminist spirituality

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. Or you can email us at this address: theMennonite@mph.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

No adoption

The article about the Eastern District Conference's discussion on the confession of faith indicates some misinformation about the origin of the Souderton, Pa., "Statement of Faith" ("Eastern District Hopes Dialogue Meetings Can Lead to Confession of Faith Resolution," May 26). That 1941 statement was not "adopted" by the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the conference did not authorize any group of people to bring forth a doctrinal statement for consideration. The origin of this statement was the desire of some members of the GC seminary board to have a "Statement of Faith" that could be used with the beginning of a new seminary. The board then asked for "approval" of this statement by the GC delegates. Not all delegates were pleased with the original wording, and the statement was revised before being "approved" by the assembly at Souderton for use by the seminary. It was never intended to have the status of an official statement of the General Conference Mennonite Church. This information was given to me by then-members of the seminary board and from the minutes of the Souderton conference.

When the GC Board of Education in 1962 revised the catechism widely used by congregations, the 1941 Souderton statement was placed at the back. Unfortunately the editor mistakenly wrote that the statement was "adopted" by the conference. Thus the historical status of the statement was reinterpreted and given a different status and purpose than it was ever meant to have.

The only official GC statements of faith have been those that are part of the GC constitutions. Congregations have been free to choose statements they would like to use or make their own statements of faith. Most have. The General Conference Mennonite Church has been very cautious in adopting statements. When the conference began, members did not ask each other about the exact content of each person's faith. Rather, they asked, in essence, what can we do together as followers of Christ?—*David L. Habegger, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

The sooner the better

Regarding the "Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials" (Readers Say, April 28 and May 19): As a leader, I know the process of revision can be long and laborious. But I experienced much emotional pain as I read the guidelines report because I am one of those pastors who was victimized by "inappropriate ways" when my alleged misconduct was brought to the attention of conference personnel. I was eventually exonerated but not without painful, inappropriate processing. All that occurred more than three years ago. Today my family and my church family still live with the pain of that event because the accuser continues to harass us based on those "inappropriate ways." The sooner we can clarify appropriate disciplinary protocol, the better off we will all be.—*Name withheld by request*

Consider colonization

The story of the Beachy Amish and Kleine Gemeinde settlements in Costa Rica ("A Fresh Breath of Life," May 5) is one that needed to be shared with the Mennonite church. I have been captivated by the concept of doing missions by colonization. We are liable to get hung up on the terminology, but the concept—committing yourself along with a few other families to long-term residence in a foreign country, being self-supporting and adapting as much as possible to the native culture—is worthy of our consideration. It seems to me to be more in keeping with the spirit of the gospel than the authority- and money-leveraged way missions is traditionally done. The Beachy

Pontius' Puddle

by Joel Kauffmann

WITH A POPULATION EXPLOSION THREATENING TO OVERWHELM THE EARTH'S RESOURCES, MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO RECONSIDER YOUR INSTRUCTION FOR US TO "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY."
PERHAPS, BUT GIVEN YOUR TRACK RECORD ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, I'D HATE TO RETRACT THE ONE REQUEST YOU'VE ACTUALLY COMPLIED WITH!
Joel
PONTPUDL@AOL.COM
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Vol. 1, No. 17, June 16, 1998

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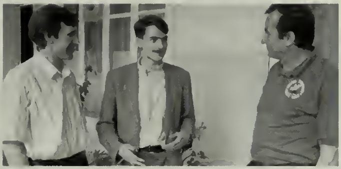

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s say readers say

Amish and other conservative groups have been doing it now for decades in many places. Why can't we "liberal" Mennonites do it?

After completing a term of service in Honduras and after dairy farming in Pennsylvania for a decade, my wife, three children and I moved in 1990 to Panama, where we continue dairy farming in the highlands of the western end of the country. I was hoping that several other Mennonite families from North America would join us, but so far we are by ourselves. Perhaps the Costa Rica story will arouse interest in the possibility of colonizing with us here?—*Jacob M. Tice, Concepcion, Panama*

Clean hearts, renewed minds

Thanks for the informative articles on anti-racism (April 14). I appreciate the fact that we are able to address this problem. It is my prayer that the Damascus Road project will fall on fertile ground, minds and hearts. Two Bible verses come to mind for all of us who hope to change from any racist feelings, attitudes and practices—Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me," and Romans 12:2a: "And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—*Lyn Hershey, Payette, Idaho*

Serious sin

Jonathan Stoltzfus says, "I think my grandmother would be shocked at today's use of the word 'gay.' I am" (Readers Say, May 19). I join with Jonathan and a multitude of other Christians who believe that the biblical teaching is that homosexuality is a serious sin. We should love those that sin in this manner and seek to help them separate from that sin.—*Daniel G. Regier, Newton, Kan.*

Cover photo
by James Carroll

Youth ministers vote for one convention

ST. LOUIS—Although denominational merger seems to be marked by the U.S.-Canadian border, General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) youth ministers want to span the 49th parallel.

The future of youth conventions in light of GC-MC integration was a major topic at the GC-MC Youth Ministry Council annual meeting April 29-May 2. The youth ministers unanimously supported a proposal for an integrated convention for U.S. and Canadian youth, to be held in Canada in 2001.

"I was very moved by the response, by the fact that the U.S. people voted to go to Canada, and that they all felt it was most important that the youth meet together rather than in separate U.S. and Canadian conventions," said Abe Bergen, GC director of youth ministry. "It said a lot about where our youth ministers are in the integration process."

Scheduling is still up in the air for conventions after next summer's joint gathering in St. Louis.

A growing concern for the philosophy behind short-term mission projects was part of meeting discussions between the youth ministers and Del Hershberger, coordinator of short-term mission for Mennonite Board of Missions. Hershberger reported on a December consultation sponsored by MBM and involving 50 participants from educational, mission and service agencies as well as local mission projects.

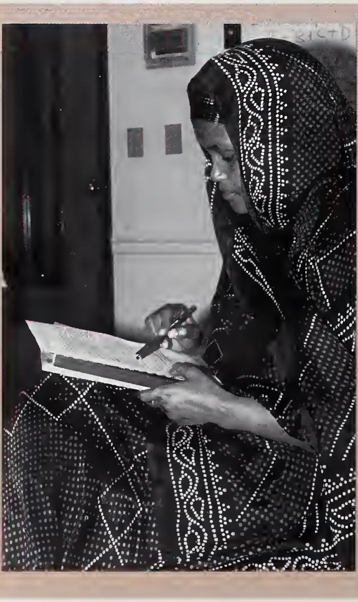
"We acknowledged that hands-on, practical experiential learning is very valuable, but we are asking the question, Are we primarily market-driven or prophetically driven?" Hershberger said. "We are having the largest year ever in both Youth Venture and Group Venture [short-term service programs], and we attribute that to the service emphasis at the Orlando and Winnipeg youth conventions [last year]. What we are working on is the attitude and approach that is taken by youth and their leaders on these trips so that they understand the importance of going to learn from the hosts as opposed to doing for the hosts. We are also hearing from the hosts that they want to be more a part of the process."—*Carol Duerksen for GCMC News Service*

It said a lot about where our youth ministers are in the integration process.

—Abe Bergen

Peaceful study

Nuria Abdi of Kenya takes notes during her "Intermediary Roles and Practice" class, part of the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. The class explored the theory and practice of third-party intervention in social conflict with emphasis on mediation. The institute offered five classes between May 4 and June 26, which drew 155 people from around the world to study conflict, development, restorative justice, trauma healing and reconciliation.



Jim Bishop

Nigerian bishop dreams of larger church

ELKHART, Ind.—The bishop of the Mennonite Church of Nigeria says the time has come for his church to grow.

"I think God will open the way for the Mennonite church to be planted all over Nigeria," Ime Udo Nsasak told a May 8 gathering at Prairie Street Mennonite Church organized by Mennonite Board of Missions to celebrate African Christianity.

"We have stayed only in one state for 40 years. It is now time for the Anabaptist church to move out, to be known by the people of Nigeria so that we can … usher in peace, love and faith in Jesus Christ," said Nsasak, who spent the past year in the pastoral ministries program at Hesston (Kan.) College.

The Mennonite Church in Nigeria, now reporting about 7,000 members, was formed in the early 1960s when MBM workers responded to a request from some Nigerian Christians who wanted to organize themselves under the Mennonite name.—*MBM News Service*

MCC office returns to agency's origins

But Ukraine relocation more about future than past

ZAPOROZHYE, Ukraine — More than 75 years ago, a new organization called Mennonite Central Committee came to the Zaporozhye region of southeastern Ukraine to help fellow Mennonites who were suffering from war and famine. Last month, MCC returned to Zaporozhye, moving its program office from Moscow with the hope of once again helping people in need.

While MCC and Mennonites have deep historical roots in the region, the move is more about the present and future than the past. Only a few Mennonites remain in the region, most having fled to North and South America and Europe. But new human needs confront MCC in the post-Soviet Ukraine.

One reason for the move is that Zaporozhye offers a more central location as most of MCC's program in the former Soviet Union is being conducted in the Ukraine. MCC also continues to work in Siberia and the North Caucasus region of Russia.

"Moscow used to be an important logistical center," says Steve Hochstetler Shirk, who, with his wife, Cheryl, directs MCC's programs in the former Soviet Union. During Soviet times, all infrastructure was routed through Moscow, including communication and transportation. With the emergence of the Ukraine and other former Soviet republics, infrastructure is now more regionalized, dislodging Moscow as the center of power and control.

Besides, Shirk says, Moscow is expensive.

More importantly, however, the move reflects MCC's desire to draw on the "strong base for local cooperation and program development" that comes with Zaporozhye, Shirk says. Local churches are eager to develop their own congregations and communities through various social and development projects, such as homeless shelters for children and business loan projects. The region has 68 Baptist churches and a new Mennonite congregation, started in 1992.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, social problems such as homelessness, violence, crime and family disintegration, once dealt with through the Soviet state, are now pouring into the streets. State factories have closed, creating high unemployment and a weakened economy, aggravating the social problems.

"MCC was the first to respond to the needs for assistance here," says Pavel Metlenko, director of the Zaporozhye Evangelical Christian/Baptist churches. Material aid containers have been coming here every year since 1991.

"As the U.S.S.R. disintegrated and the economy went into a slide, people appealed to the churches for help," Metlenko says.

MCC photo by Mark Beach

Steve Hochstetler Shirk (center), co-director of Mennonite Central Committee's programs in the former Soviet Union, visits with Donetsk Christian University president Alex Melnichouk (right) and director of external affairs Valentin Nikonenko. MCC, which recently moved an office to nearby Zaporozhye, has volunteers teaching at the school.

In addition to the material aid, MCC has worked closely with the Protestant churches in Ukraine to strengthen their churches and church agencies. Once preoccupied with simply surviving under communism, churches see there is more they can do to meet local human needs. During the Soviet era, the church was not allowed to do volunteer work or address local social problems. Now the church views its role as more significant.

With the assistance of MCC, the Christian/Baptist churches have developed a small-business revolving loan program in Zaporozhye. Already, $10,000 has been distributed, with an additional $20,000 to be loaned throughout the remainder of 1998.

Social work, once the domain of the state, is now a course of study in most universities. But resources are slim, so Florence and Otto Driedger, longtime MCC workers from Regina, Sask., have been giving social work lectures at Zaporozhye State University and at a seminary and social work college in Odessa. To the east of Zaporozhye, MCC volunteers are teaching at a Christian university in Donetsk and working with homeless children in Makeevka.

The world has changed radically since MCC first came to Ukraine with relief aid in the 1920s. "We are returning here and will be applying some of the lessons we have learned over the past 75 years," Shirk says.

The fact that Zaporozhye is steeped in Mennonite history made the move all the more appealing, he says.

Metlenko couldn't be happier to see MCC making a commitment to the region. "Mennonites prepared the soil here in many regards," he says. "For example, in the acceptance of the gospel. The Mennonite villages were distinguished by orderliness, cleanliness, working the land, animal husbandry. In all these things they were much more progressive.

"So, it is very just that MCC establishes its center here."—*Mark Beach of MCC News Service*

> **We are returning here and will be applying some of the lessons we have learned over the past 75 years.**
>
> —*Steve Hochstetler Shirk*

Administrator finds North Korea's needs despite official shows of self-reliance

MCC photo by Kevin King

North Korean students are delighted by pictures of the family of Kevin King, Mennonite Central Committee's aid administrator, who recently visited the country.

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee aid administrator Kevin King went to North Korea expecting to go to the MCC-assisted farming community of Sambong and "get dirty in the fields." But North Korean government officials had other ideas for the delegation he was part of from April 25 to May 4.

Officials guided the visitors through impressive structures—including a 200-room "children's palace" covering two city blocks, where children learn to play musical instruments—past towering monuments and even to a circus performance. The tour was punctuated by six- and seven-course meals. "I had to keep pinching myself, reminding myself that I was in North Korea," King says.

This clash of expectations illustrates why the world community finds it difficult to assess needs in North Korea and to offer appropriate aid, despite strong evidence of famine. Any aid coming into the country is an affront to a deeply ingrained policy of self-reliance. At the same time, the country is suffering severe food shortages. Reports indicate the country ran out of food in March and is now surviving on donations from the international community.

King eventually was able to schedule an afternoon at Sambong, which is a two-hour drive northwest of the capital city Pyongyang. Over the past year MCC, with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), has supplied seeds, fertilizers, plastic sheeting and other items valued at more than $200,000 to the area, part of North Korea's western plains "rice bowl."

King found dilapidated farming equipment. In one place he saw three tractors being stripped for parts to keep a fourth tractor running. Mechanics were fixing a rice transplanter with only minimal tools: a pair of pliers, a mallet, a screwdriver. King was told 50 percent of the equipment is in disrepair. North Korea's crippled economy has left many items, particularly spare parts, in short supply. King notes oxen are now being used to pull plows, but that the animals appeared to be unhealthy.

King also saw the spring barley planted from seeds donated by MCC and AFSC. "I calculated that for each dollar MCC spent on barley seed, $7 worth of food was produced," he says. "I feel MCC's efforts are on the right track. Farming and food production are definite priorities for North Koreans."

But King, a trained agriculturist, says the North Korean's philosophy of soil science is wrong, that the soil's organic matter needs to be replenished. "Farmers, heavily dependent on chemical fertilizers, are feeding the plants instead of the soil," he says.

Following his visit, King outlined some recommendations for further MCC aid to North Korea but also stressed the importance of promoting more contact between North Koreans and North Americans. On several occasions, North Korean officials expressed their desire for friendship.

MCC and AFSC hope to continue assisting Sambong by supplying plastic sheeting used to cover plants in the chilly springtime, fertilizer, machine parts and safer pesticides, and by looking for ways to demonstrate alternative farming practices. The two organizations will also try to respond to requests for help with potato research. The North Korean government has identified potatoes as a priority crop and has asked for help in refurbishing a potato research center.

Since April 1996, MCC has contributed aid worth $3.1 million to North Korea, including taking part in a Canadian Foodgrains Bank wheat shipment of 16,000 tons valued at $3.4 million that set sail from Vancouver last month. MCC is also preparing a shipment of 20,000 combination school-health kits for children in Pyongyang and in rural schools in the southern part of North Korea. Additionally, MCC will ship 109 metric tons of canned meat for use in North Korean hospitals.—*Pearl Sensenig of MCC News Service*

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Hopi school looks to financial future

PHOENIX—As Hopi Mission School looks to the future, financial stability promises to be one of its thorniest challenges.

In 1993, the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) decided that the Kykotsmovi, Ariz., school, along with other CHM-supported ministries, needed to begin working toward self-sufficiency. CHM's funding to Hopi Mission School through the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council is being reduced by 10 percent annually until 2005. The hope is the school will then float on its own.

In 1996, David Whitermore had just resigned from a pastorate in Lenexa, Kan., and he and his wife planned to move to Arizona. When he saw an ad in *Mennonite Weekly Review* about Hopi Mission School searching for staff, he was interested in seeing if he could help. He found that what they really needed was an administrator. Whitermore didn't feel called to that position but volunteered to do what he could with fund-raising instead.

Whitermore's main avenue is the contacts with pastors he has developed over the years of working in church planting and church development. "In Pacific Southwest Conference, many of the GC pastors didn't know about the reduction in funding to Hopi Mission School, and many of the Mennonite Church pastors weren't even familiar with the ministry; MCs have traditionally worked with the Navajo," Whitermore says. "I've been sending out letters, trying to make the churches aware of the school."

Letters have been sent to churches in Kansas and Pennsylvania in addition to Pacific Southwest Conference.

Meanwhile, Gary Franz, who resigned as GC planned giving director last summer, is spearheading a long-range fund-raising plan for Hopi Mission School. "We're envisioning a 10-year plan," says Franz, a real estate broker in Newton, who just returned from his first visit to Hopi Mission School. "We have formed a foundation called the Hopi Mission Foundation and are working on getting [tax-exempt] status for the foundation and the school itself."

Franz plans to work at raising funds both for operating expenses and for an endowment to ensure long-term financial stability. "I'm volunteering to get this started and oversee it," he says. "Down the road a few years, the hope is to hire staff to do fund-raising."—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC and MBM news services*

> I've been sending out letters, trying to make the churches aware of the school.
>
> —*David Whitermore*

Harold S. Bender
1897-1962

Harold S. Bender, famous for his influential ***Anabaptist Vision***, devoted much of his life and energy to the care and direction of Mennonite institutions. He provided leadership to Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, Goshen Biblical Seminary, and other church organizations. With Bender's guidance these institutions became modernizing agents, helping Mennonites navigate the unsettling changes they encountered in the 20th century.

Paper, 600 pages, $23.99; in Canada $34.25.

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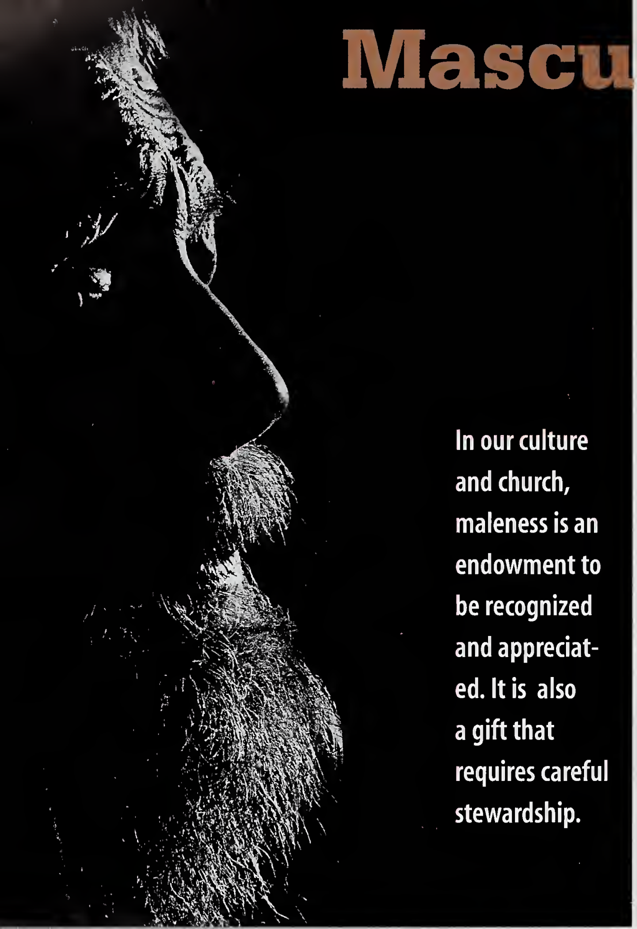
Masculinity with integrity

by Everett J. Thomas



Robert Maust

In our culture and church, maleness is an endowment to be recognized and appreciated. It is also a gift that requires careful stewardship.

To be a man is a good thing. Expressing one's masculinity with integrity and pride, however, is difficult these days. Our society and our church has confronted, appropriately, the sins committed by individual men as well as the systems that perpetuate power and privilege for all men. This confrontation has reached into the hearts and souls of many of us, and we respond in different ways.

Some of us get defensive. We point back to the excesses of the accusers and imagine a new sin: misandry (hatred of men). Others note that men are not given credit for the difficulty of our role: Men have more stress and disease than women, and they die younger. Others of us choose not to respond to the challenge at all; it seems too risky.

Nevertheless, several men's movements in the past 20 years have stirred many souls. In the past decade, scholars and theologians have written books and led retreats in a new field called "male spirituality." After more than 30 years of feminist spirituality, we are now beginning to think about spiritual formation in men.

This movement is also stirring in the Mennonite church in North America. In 1997, the Mennonite Church-General Conference Mennonite Church Spirituality Reference Council named male spirituality one of the priority areas needing attention in Mennonite life. Early this year, the MC Council on Faith, Life and Strategy called on the integrating church to form structures that support not only women but men.

How should we frame such a discussion about the spiritual life of men? How can we nurture with integrity new understandings of what a Christ-like masculinity might mean?

Scriptures and community: As with other endeavors, such discussions need to be grounded in the Bible. We may borrow language from psychology or anthropology to help us see biblical texts in a new way, but we do not start with the social sciences. To avoid the error of reading into the Bible what we want it to say, we lay our interpretation before our sisters and brothers to have our interpretation tested and tempered for strength or rejected as dangerous to our spiritual well-being.

In 1990, psychoanalyst Robert Moore and pastoral counselor Douglas Gillette published

A glossary of terms for archetypal energies

King: That part of a man that holds all the other parts together in unity and wholeness. He directs and legitimates the bigger picture, the real, the "realm." (One must participate in some "king energy" to be an adequate or good father.)

Warrior: That part of a man that can say no to himself, and to others, for the sake of a more important goal. He directs and legitimates an appropriate sense of boundaries and a needed sense of "enemies." (Essentially dependent on the wisdom of a good king/father.)

Magician: That part of a man that understands the inner world of mystery, metaphor, paradox and growth. He directs and legitimates the work of the soul, issues of darkness, light and shadow.

Lover: That part of a man that tastes, enjoys, appreciates and creates beauty and connectedness. He legitimates ultimate joy by participating in it now.

—from Quest for the Grail *by Richard Rohr (Crossroad, 1994)*

their landmark book *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover.* In it they suggested that four archetypal energies exist in each man: the king, the warrior, the magician (healer) and the lover. Franciscan retreat leader Richard Rohr took these ideas and examined how these four "energies" found expression in different biblical characters.

The possibilities are endless. For example, what great king energy blessed Israel through the wise Solomon (or commensurate queen energy through Esther)? Can we see the warrior energy in Paul as he campaigned for the Gentiles? Do we really understand the healing arts of the three magi (wise men) who visited the baby Jesus in Bethlehem? And can we see the profound beauty of a Creator who loved the world into existence in Genesis 1?

If through an appropriate interpretive process we find it helpful to read the Bible stories in these ways, then we can take another step. What do these archetypal energies mean for the integrating Mennonite church in this era, and do they offer new resources for men to grow spiritually?

Mennonite warrior? It is conventional wisdom that our church did something to its leaders after the 1960s. A former Mennonite Church moderator said publicly on several occasions that we "eunuchized" our leaders. For whatever reasons, we disabled (castrated) most of the male leaders of an entire generation.

What happened to the king energy in our church during this 30-year hiatus? Because these energies are primordial, they must emerge somewhere. Did those who carried great endowments of the king energy simply find other channels for its expression? One friend suggests that this energy left the pastorate and went into the business world. This may be the reason for the exponential growth in such organizations like Mennonite Economic Development Associates and Mennonite Mutual Aid.

Or what happens to the warrior energy in a peace church? Good warriors strategize and campaign (by the highest standards of ethical conduct) for the good of the community. In what forms has warrior energy found expression in Mennonite church life today? Many of our peace and justice advocates are motivated by great warrior energy. At times their stridency makes us uncomfortable, but we know they are campaigning for the truth as we know it.

Although warrior and king energy are the predominant archetypes in men, the magician (or healer) energy, and lover energy are also alive and well. The magician energy clearly emerged in the Mennonite church after World War II: Former CPS men became therapists and doctors and built psychiatric hospitals and nursing homes across the continent. As we read the stories of Jesus' healing compassion for the lame, our reflexes to "follow Jesus" mean that we really do want "healing and hope to flow through us to the world."

Finally, what about the lover? How has the love of beauty taken expression in the Mennonite church? As with all of these archetypal energies, we can suppress the energy, but the lover must come out.

To be a man is a good thing if this gift is exercised with integrity and a commitment to building God's kingdom through the church.

During the era when instrumental music was prohibited in some parts of the church, we developed gorgeous four-part a capella singing. In an era of plain dress, we cherished the color and patterns of beautiful quilts. And in the rural parts of the church, Mennonite barns sparkled with red paint while garlands of flower beds surrounded bountiful vegetable gardens.

Understanding the latent energies that influence our leadership can serve more than personal self-understanding. Male leaders in the church become stewards of these energies and discern how to use them in ways that can strengthen Mennonite church life. For example, we may wish to bless the king energy in some of our leaders during the turmoil and confusion that is emerging around the integration process. We may wish to bless the warriors in our midst who are champions for the oppressed and disenfranchised. We may learn more about what it means to introduce healing services into congregational life and further imagine ways that healing and hope can flow through us to the world. And the church may be enriched as we delight in God's beauty around us and learn new ways to cherish this beauty in our worship life, in our homes and in our families.

Understanding the energies bubbling up in men is the first step toward expressing our masculinity with integrity. In our culture and church, maleness is an endowment to be recognized and appreciated. It is also a gift that requires careful stewardship. To be a man is a good thing if this gift is exercised with integrity and a commitment to building God's kingdom through the church.

Everett J. Thomas is president of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries in Elkhart, Ind., an overseer in the Indiana-Michigan Conference and an elder at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Some resources on masculine spirituality:

- *Fire in the Belly* by Sam Keen (Bantam, 1992)
- *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette (HarperSanFrancisco, 1992)
- *Wildmen, Warriors and Kings: Masculine Spirituality in the Bible* by Patrick Arnold (Crossroad, 1995)
- *The Wild Man's Journey* by Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996)

Holy fellowship

1 John 1:1-3 conveys the reality, relevance and result of Jesus' incarnation.

by Ann Weber Becker

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.
—1 John 1:1-3

"Mom! Dad!" the child cries. Whether bursting through the door, tearing down the stairs or looking up from a book, the cry is the same when there is a discovery to share. Whether the discovery is the first ripe raspberry, a new neighbor or a funny picture, containing this excitement is not an option. Something wonderful has happened and must be shared.

While we adults rarely bound down the steps with our good news, we surely share the need to draw others into our experiences of importance and excitement. Without diminishing the gift of walking with each other in times of pain, I have heard it said that a true friend is one with whom we can share joy.

Joy, and its first cousin, awe. As I listen to my sons' inquiries about planets, stars and galaxies, I am privileged to witness their deepening awareness of God's created universe and to share in their amazement, their awe. "Did you know that some of the stars we see at night aren't there anymore? A star might have gone out years ago, but we're still seeing the light it made—it was so far away it takes that long for its light to get to earth." This awe is not the staid, hands-folded-on-lap variety but one with energy, humbly vibrant—akin to joy.

I read this vibrancy between the lines in the first letter of John. I sense the author's eagerness to share a distillation of the gospel with fellow community members for their edification and sustenance.

While many scholars do not believe it is possible to set a firm author, time and place for this letter (it contains fewer clues than, say, many of Paul's letters), most agree that it was addressed to a particular Christian community toward the end of the first century. This means that people reading it who had encountered Jesus firsthand would have been few and far between. The author is eager to communicate Jesus' reality, the relevance of his life and the result of embracing a lived faith.

Reality: 1 John 1:1-4 stands as a prologue to the letter, much like John 1:1-18 is to the fourth Gospel. While their content is similar, the styles of the two prologues are decidedly different. Instead of the stately, refined style of John 1:1-18, the first verses of 1 John come crashing through the screen door:

"We've heard it! We've seen it! We've looked at it! We've touched it with our hands!" And again (in case we missed it the first time) "We've seen it!"

This is major excitement, ranking even higher than witnessing a sticky Monarch butterfly emerging from its jeweled chrysalis. Can we feel it? The Word, with God since the beginning, was revealed in human form by becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

In Jesus, heaven and earth embrace. Reflect for a moment on the humility displayed by the One who was there from the beginning becoming a human being on our little planet orbiting around a medium-sized star, in one of who-knows-how-many millions of galaxies. Indeed, the more we learn about the universe and by extension the God who created it, the more awesome the incarnation becomes.

Relevance: From an ecstatic declaration of Jesus' incarnation, 1 John leads us to an interpretation of why it matters: "So that you also may have fellowship ('koinonia') with us" (verse 3).

I once sat in a prayer group gathered around a visual depiction of three angelic figures. The painting was a Russian icon, *The Old Testament Trinity* by medieval artist Andrei Rublev. These figures, which came to be understood as God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, are seated around three edges of a small table. The table edge in the foreground is empty. The leader invited us, in prayer, to step into the picture—to approach the unoccupied spot at the table to be in the presence of the Holy Trinity.

The three figures are gathered around a table, food is present, and there is a welcoming space for a guest to enter. With a smile, I thought that stepping into the painting would be like stepping into a church fellowship meal. However light-hearted this observation, it is clear in the painting that fellowship is hallowed, and, at their best, church carry-in meals involve reverent fellowship.

Our Mennonite heritage has schooled us well in revering fellowship and nurturing communities. Church potlucks aside, whenever two or three are gathered—in a small group meeting, in welcoming a stranger, in rebuilding after a natural disaster, in soulful singing of our hymns, in witnessing to the powers—whenever Christ-love flows between us, there is fellowship and it is blessed. No wonder 1 John 1:3 portrays fellowship as no less than the goal of the proclamation of the gospel.

The memorable prayer time in the presence of Rublev's painting brought together differing expressions of holy fellowship. I did not sit alone but among brothers and sisters of God's family. Christ-love fellowship abided in the shared silence, in the offering of insights from our journaling and in visiting together after the prayer time. But though I prayed from a context of community, it was me reaching for God. Me. Rublev's icon helped me see again that while personal spirituality is sometimes touted as individualistic and counter to the spirit of community, it can also be seen as another vibrant form of fellowship. There is room at the table with God, Jesus and the Spirit, and I am invited to share in, even contribute to, this fellowship.

I was blessed that morning by the fellowship with God and with my brothers and sisters in Christ; I sensed that each manner of fellowship had informed the other. Indeed, 1 John fuses the experience of human fellowship and fellowship with "the Father and his Son" (verse 3).

Result: The brief prologue of 1 John concludes as enthusiastically as it began. Jesus' incarnation has been declared so that fellowship may thrive. And what is the result? Joy. "We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete" (verse 4).

Read 1 John and you will find "love" throughout. With all this love in the air, it would seem natural for joy to abound. We find here a community striving to embody holy fellowship, to embody love: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God" (1 John 4:7).

"The Holy Trinity" by Andrew Rublev, from *Behold the Beauty of the Lord*

But the picture is not entirely idyllic. A closer reading reveals that conflict brews within the community. If the church was grinding through tension, how then joy?

Surely whenever we share love in fellowship, we know the potential for joy and the potential for pain. To reach the heights in one direction usually means pummeling the depths in the other direction from time to time. Perhaps 1 John speaks of the joy of linking arms and enjoying the ride. 1 John also celebrates that Jesus has linked arms for the ride too.

While divine, Jesus was also fully human; Jesus lived a life of love. Put the two together, and we find in Jesus a trustworthy guide showing us how to be fully human. Or, in the words of Madeleine L'Engle: "Jesus came to us as a truly human being, to show us how to be human. … And God does not ask us to be perfect; God asks us to be human" (*Sold into Egypt*). Maybe that is where the joy comes in.

Sensing a child's unbounded excitement and awe in the opening verses of 1 John came from the use of family imagery in the rest of the letter. Whether describing the relationship between God and Jesus (1 John 2:24), between the author and the community (1 John 3:7) or between the members of the community (1 John 4:20), family imagery abounds.

How do you respond to the observation that the author of this letter chose family ties to encase a call to love? If you, like me, rejoice in the relationships of covenant around you, you may find the link between family and God-intended love encouraging and supportive. If you, like me, know what it is to struggle in these relationships from time to time, then you may find these verses discouraging or threatening. On a bad day, when stresses build at home, in extended family, in friendship circles or at church, the words of 1 John may well be greeted with a cynical, "Yeah, right."

The next time I hit one of those days, I want to remember this: Perhaps the love is there waiting to be discovered. Perhaps, thanks to God's creative hand of love, thanks to Jesus' sojourn among us, thanks to the Spirit's restless presence, thanks to these and other mysteries, the love is there between us patiently waiting for us to see it.

Indeed, life-giving love was there from the beginning (1 John 1:1). And in those hallowed moments when we hear it, see it, look at it, touch it, we may come crashing through the screen door, too. Full of joy.

Ann Weber Becker attends Mannheim Mennonite Church near Kitchener, Ont.

Rublev's icon helped me see again that while personal spirituality is sometimes touted as individualistic and counter to the spirit of community, it can also be seen as another vibrant form of fellowship.

Emma Richards was ordained June 17, 1973, at Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church, the first woman ordained for pastoral ministry in the General Conference Mennonite Church or Mennonite Church. A June 20-21 celebration at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., will commemorate 25 years of Mennonite women in pastoral ministry. Richards will bring the sermon on the morning of June 21. The weekend event is supported by Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries.

Symposium stresses peacemaking

GOSHEN, Ind.—Create colleges within colleges to focus and unleash potential for peacemaking and service by a small group of committed faculty members and students, urged speaker Vincent Harding during a May 27-28 symposium at Goshen College.

"You are in a wonderful, wonderful position to educate for peacemaking," said Harding, a professor at Iliff School of Theology, Denver.

The symposium, "Interweaving Christian Spirituality, Peacemaking and Service," drew about 100 faculty members from Goshen, Bluffton (Ohio) College and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. It was sponsored by the C. Henry Smith Trust.

MMA counselors honored

ELKHART, Ind.—John Grieder of Carlock, Ill., has been named Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) counselor of the year, while Celia Mueller of Wilsonville, Ore., was named associate counselor of the year. Roy Bergey of Goshen, Ind., was named fast start producer of the year. The awards recognize professional competence, commitment to customer service and commitment to the vision of mutual aid and stewardship.

MMA has also recognized Grieder and eight other counselors for sales: Jonas Borntrager, Harrisonburg, Va.; John Buckwalter, Lancaster, Pa.; Leo Heatwole, Harrisonburg; Steve Herendeen, Goshen, Ind; Marvin Holck, Newton, Kan; David Martin, Goshen; and Norman Maust, Goshen.—*MMA News Service*

Provident Bookstores adds eighth store

SCOTTDALE, Pa.—Provident Bookstores has added an Orrville, Ohio, store to its chain. Martin's Book Store was owned and operated by the Martin family for 50 years, but current owner Alice Martin is retiring. The purchase brings the number of Provident stores to eight, stretching from Doylestown, Pa., to Bloomington, Ill. Provident is owned and operated by Mennonite Publishing House.

Brazilian Mennonites respond to drought

RECIFE, Brazil—Mennonites across Brazil are collecting and transporting food for victims of what may be the worst drought in the country's history. Mennonite Central Committee Brazil has been asked to distribute the food, a development MCC Brazil worker John Hutton calls "a welcome new level of trust and cooperation in the relationship between MCC and national churches."

The drought, spread across northeastern Brazil, may be threatening as many as 10 million people. It has devastated both the current crop and made replanting nearly impossible, leaving subsistence farmers with no source of food for at least a year.—*MCC News Service*

EMU, Bethel to emphasize environment

Two Mennonite colleges will give more academic attention to the environment starting this fall. Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., has added a major in environmental science, and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has beefed up its offerings for its environmental science concentration.

EMU's new major will include field work, projects and possibly a senior practicum. Bethel has shifted its environmental science concentration from the global studies department to biology. The new curriculum will have more science courses.

COLLEGE CHAPLAIN

Conrad Grebel College invites applications for a part-time Chaplain (50%) effective July 1999. The College will add additional responsibilities toward a full-time position depending on the applicant's training and interests.

Conrad Grebel College is a small, Mennonite liberal arts College affiliated with the University of Waterloo. The College has a very active, exciting, energetic, and creative student development and religious life program. The chapel program serves students from diverse backgrounds and faculties at the University of Waterloo. The Chaplain serves students in residence as well as associate students (students not in residence who make Grebel their home base while at the University).

Candidates must have the minimum of an M.Div. degree and some pastoral or chaplaincy experience. Preference will be given to candidates with a doctoral degree or near the completion of such a degree. Candidates should be familiar with and accept the Anabaptist-Mennonite theological perspective of the College.

Please send letter of application and resume, along with names, addresses, and phone numbers of three referees to:

John E. Toews,
President
Conrad Grebel College
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G6
Phone: (519) 885-0220, ext. 237
Fax: (519) 885-0014

Closing date for Applications: August 14, 1998

Events

"Dancing in the Southwind" Supportive Congregations Network international gathering, July 24-26, Wichita, Kan. Contact: SCN, 612-722-6906.
Civilian Public Service reunion, Aug. 19-20, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. Contact: Irvin E. Cordell, 57 E. Grandview, Mercersburg, PA, 717-328-2746.

Workers

Miller, John A., ended a pastorate April 15 at First Mennonite Church, San Francisco.
Pham, Thanh Cong, was installed April 19 as pastor of Vietnamese Gospel Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa.
Schlabach, Tina, has accepted a pastorate at Shalom Mennonite Fellowship, Tucson, Ariz.

Births

Beamer, Molly Kristine, April 9, to Hal and Kerri (Schultz) Beamer, Albany, Ore.
Ellis, Christopher Joseph Bradford, May 13, to Angela (Lichti) and Christopher Ellis, Newton, Kan.
Franklin, Jesse Kevin Tyler, April 7, to Paige (Hall) and Samuel Franklin, Salem, Ore.
Grove, Brittany Kristine, April 3, to Andy and Tina (Martin) Grove, Richmond, Va.
Miller, Katlyn Rose, April 24, to Audrey (Geissinger) and Mark Miller, Nappanee, Ind.
Mumau, Devon Lee, May 7, to Jeff and Shawna (Wagler) Mumau, Mogadore, Ohio.
Oakes, Ian Roger, May 9, to Kristin (Kauffman) and Roger Oakes, Hubbard, Ore.
Reimold, Faith Morgan, May 7, to Donita (Lapp) and Shawn Reimold, Gap, Pa.
Sequeira, Jessa Marie, May 12, to Carlos and Lisa (Bardell) Sequeira, Canby, Ore.
Slabaugh, Seth David, May 14, to Beth (Kanagy) and Ryan Slabaugh, Hartville, Ohio.
Smucker, Olivia Jenine, April 25, to David and Sheri (Hartzler) Brubaker Smucker, Harrisonburg, Va.

Marriages

Barber/Cripe: Troy Barber, Elkhart, Ind., and Jody Cripe, Elkhart, May 16, by Wesley Bontreger.
Boller/Gerber: Lori Boller, Kalona, Iowa, and Nolan Gerber, Dalton, Ohio, May 2, by Wes Bontreger.
Brunstetter/Trout: Trisha Brunstetter, Souderton, Pa., and Tom Trout, Perkasie, Pa., May 16, by David Greiser and Gerald Clemmer.
Crocker/Kagele: Colleen Crocker, Spokane, Wash. and Dennis Kagele, Ritzville, Wash., March 7 by Duncan Smith.
Kaufman/Park: Joan Kaufman, Harrisburg, S.D., and Darrell Park, Aurora, S.D., May 2, by Richard Gehring.
Lakjer/Riccio: Christen Lakjer, Lansdale, Pa., and Michael Riccio, Lansdale, May 16, by Michael Meneses.
Landis/Shellenberger: Mildred Landis, Lititz, Pa., and Shelley Shellenberger, Mount Joy, Pa., May 16, by Glen Sell.
Morrison/Rohrer: Paige Morrison, Atlanta, and John Rohrer, Lancaster, Pa., May 9, by Robert Cargo.
Schrock/Tessmer: John Shrock, Hartville, Ohio, and Kelly Tessmer, Hartville, April 4, by Joe Yoder and Myron Weaver.

Deaths

Nofziger, Bryan William, 28, Archbold, Ohio, died May 13. Survivors: parents, Peter and Shirley Nofziger. Burial: May 16 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Wayne Pipkin.
Reber, Elta Miller, 87, Wellman, Iowa, died May 9. Survivors: husband, Maynard; children Wilma Rhodes, Carroll; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: May 12 at Kalona, Iowa, by Scott Swartzendruber and Mick Murray.
Yoder, Omer, 79, Goshen, Ind., died May 12 of cancer. Survivors: children Beverly DuCharme, Ronald, Steven, Darrel; 12 grandchildren. Burial: May 15 at Goshen by Myron Schrag and Karen Ediger.

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Classifieds

Belleville Mennonite School, Belleville, Pa., needs a ***science teacher*** (grades 8-12) beginning August 1998. Please contact Ray Baker, superintendent, at 717-935-2184 or fax 717-935-5641.

Israel Bike Ride for Nazareth Hospital, Oct. 30-Nov. 8, 1998. Participants must raise a minimum of $3,800. Optional two-day extension available. Contact Nazareth Project, 12B S. 7th St., Akron, PA 17501; 717-859-1389; email NAZPROJ@redrose.net.

Lancaster Mennonite High School: Full-time ***secretarial positions*** open in development and guidance offices—reduced hours over summer. ***Part-time dorm advisers*** for girls and boys needed—includes benefits. Call 717-299-0436.

Pondered in Her Heart—Hannah's Book: Inside and Outside by Elaine Sommers Rich, is available in bookstores or may be ordered from the publisher. Wordsworth, 702 N.E. 24th St., Newton, KS 67114-9275; $15.95 postpaid (Kansas residents add $.76 sales tax).

Friendship Community, Lancaster County, Pa., has ***program coordinator*** position available immediately. Responsibilities include coordinating residential program and supervising staff. Qualifications include degree in human services/education arena and two years experience with developmental disabilities.

Call Denise Herr, 717-656-2466, for more information.

Virginia Mennonite Conference is seeking a half-time ***youth minister,*** beginning Sept. 1, 1998. Qualifications include being self-motivated and visionary with administrative, relational and communication skills; bachelor's degree required.

Contact Owen Burkholder or Lois Maust at 540-434-9727; email vmconf@aol.com. Application deadline June 17.

Mennonite Central Committee seeks applicants for 4-month assignments at the ***Near East School of Theology*** in Beirut, Lebanon. Suitable for biblical seminary professors, librarians, music teachers or computer experts looking for sabbatical opportunities. Qualifications: Master's degree required; doctorate preferred; teaching experience in a religious institution preferred. Food and housing provided for participants and spouses without children.

Call MCC Human Resources at 717-859-1151 (U.S.) or 204-261-6381 (Canada).

Bluffton College needs ***vice president for enrollment management.*** Position opens Aug. 1, 1998. Qualifications include commitment to the mission of a Mennonite church-affiliated liberal arts college, demonstrated leadership and higher education administrative skills, and high energy in a change-oriented environment. Master's degree required, doctorate preferred. For more information, see http://www.bluffton.edu.

Submit letter of application, resume and four references to the President's Office, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. EOE. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Mennonite Mutual Aid has the following positions available:

Programmer/analyst—Develop, implement and design information systems in IBM AS/400 Synon, RPG and PC LAN environment. Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience required; experience in or ability to learn programming languages, systems analysis, design and project management; good interpersonal skills.

Sales systems support specialist—Provide technical support for systems. Implement and install computer systems. Provide training for in-house developed and purchased systems. Bachelor's degree required; teaching and coaching skills helpful; strong aptitude for working with computers and learning new software quickly; up to 25 percent travel.

MMA offers a positive, smoke-free work environment and an excellent benefit package. Send or fax resume to: Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 219-533-5264.

Goshen College seeks a quarter-time ***sports information director.*** The SID is responsible for public relations, marketing and promotional efforts for the athletic department and student-athletes at Goshen College, including media relations, production of print pieces and web site development. Preferred experience includes proven reporting, writing, editing, photography, web development, graphic design and budgeting skills; strong computer skills and the ability to learn new programs easily; a basic knowledge of the rules and statistics of all GC sports. Attention to detail, supervisory and organizational skills expected.

Please send letter of application, resume and three letters of references to Lyle Miller, director of public relations, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7572; fax 219-535-7670; email lylegm@goshen.edu. Review of applications will begin June 15 and continue until the position is filled. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries has a full-time opening for its ***conventions coordinator***, whose primary duties relate to the biennial Mennonite Youth Convention. The successful applicant will have experience in youth ministry, congregational leadership, financial management and administration of personnel. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact Everett Thomas at MBCM, P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245. Or call 219-294-7523, or email: MBCM@mcimail.com.

Classified advertising space is available in *The Mennonite* to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, with a minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite,* call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

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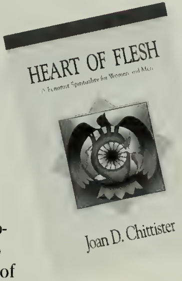
by Gordon Houser

For many, "feminist" is a dirty word, even worse than "pacifist." Feminists are raving women who burn their bras and promote abortion. Rush Limbaugh, in his brash talk-radio programs, calls them "feminazis," displaying less insight than ignorance and fear.

Others see it in a different light. In an important new book, *Heart of Flesh* (Eerdmans, 1998, $20), Joan D. Chittister presents "a feminist spirituality for women and men."

She begins by looking at feminism as "a cornerstone of spirituality." She distinguishes feminism from "feminine." Wholeness needs to include the feminine: "Spirituality that does not release the feminine dimension in both women and men leaves them half-souled." Feminism, on the other hand, is a point of view "geared to the creation of a society that rejects decisions, roles and categories based on sex alone."



In the first third of the book, Chittister considers some of the problems that feminism addresses and sets them in context. She looks at culture as a foundation of spirituality, which she defines as "a composite of those practices, attitudes and values designed to bring us to the height of spiritual development, to the depths of goodness, to authentic conjunction with the will of God in the here and now." In sum, it is "theology walking."

She also discusses patriarchy as "the old worldview" and feminism as "the new worldview." Patriarchy, she says, is more than a set of social structures. It is "a cluster of values, a mindset, a way of looking at life, a worldview based on superiority, domination, effectiveness and conformity." And she emphasizes that "patriarchy damages both men and women."

Feminism addresses patriarchy head-on. Our context, Chittister writes, is one where "most of the illiterate of the world are still women, most of the underpaid and unemployed are still women, most of the disenfranchised, the socially invisible, the professionally under-represented and the legally denied in every society on earth are still women."

She goes on to show how feminist spirituality reflects the life and teachings of Jesus. "The Gospels provide a model of male-female relationships that few churches, if any, have fully modeled since the time of Jesus," she writes.

She also addresses the objections of those calling for tradition. She shows how in Scripture the Israelites moved from the concept of a tribal God to "a universal God who did not belong to Israel" and how Jesus revealed the mind of God in "consorting with Romans and Samaritans, with Canaanites and tax collectors, with Pharisees and women." She concludes, "To close off the possibility of new insights into the mind of God now is to close this generation off to the Holy Spirit."

Chittister also critiques feminism that lacks a spirituality. It runs the risk of becoming what it rejects: "an elitist ideology, arrogant, superficial and separatist, closed to everything but itself." Some feminists have excluded women, for instance, who want to stay at home to care for their children. However, while "feminism without spirituality is fragile," she writes, "spirituality without feminism is incomplete at best, sterile at its worst."

In the main part of the book, Chittister shows how feminist spirituality overcomes dualisms and presents new ways of living. She critiques divisions between reason and feeling, power and empowerment, aggression and nonviolence, pride and humility, universalism and otherness, authoritarianism and dialogue, competition and compassion, vulnerability and strength.

Heart of Flesh also includes story and art to develop its case. Each chapter begins with a full-color illustration by Nancy Earle (like the one on the cover, above), and Chittister presents vignettes that illustrate the point she is making in that chapter.

The stories and examples come mainly out of the author's context, Catholicism. Nevertheless, the points being made apply readily to our own context.

The book's title comes from God's promise to "remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). The promise is to make us human again, to give us a new way of being. Chittister concludes by describing this new way: "When the filter through which we see the world brings us to openness and compassion for that world—humility in the face of it, vulnerability to the impact of it, nonviolence in dealing with it, and respect for its otherness—then creation is recreated, and humans become human again."

That's what she calls feminist spirituality. Sounds like Christianity to me.

> The Gospels provide a model of male-female relationships that few churches, if any, have fully modeled since the time of Jesus.
>
> *—Joan Chittister*

videos

Here are two recent video releases worth viewing:

- *Mrs. Brown* (PG) tells the story of a scandal in 19th-century Britain when Queen Victoria (played marvelously by Judi Dench) came to place great trust in a Mr. Brown, one of her servants. It offers a glimpse into both the politics of the time as well as themes of loyalty, classism and healing from sorrow.
- *The Sweet Hereafter* (R), directed by Canadian Atom Egoyan, explores the effects on a community of a tragic school bus accident when a lawyer (Ian Holm) raises questions. People's lives are torn apart, then begin to mend.

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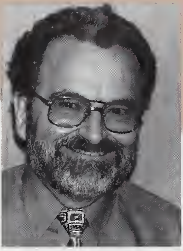


J. Lorne Peachey

Created in the image of God

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.—Genesis 1:27

Ever since those words were first penned, we humans have been trying to figure out what they mean. How are we God's image? Is it in that mysterious inner part we call the soul? Or are our bodies involved in some way? And since the words male and female appear right after the word image, does this mean our sexuality is also some reflection of God?

The fact that we haven't known exactly what to make of this verse hasn't kept us from supplying definitions of our own. So we've come to define male as aggressive, strong, powerful, rational. Female we consider to be emotional, feeling, compassionate, vulnerable.

Not only have we made these stereotypes about different sexes, but we've also applied them to God. So we argue about whether our Creator is male or female, about whether to refer to God as him or her—even when Genesis has sexes and God in the same verse.

In trying to figure out what it means to be created in the image of God, I've found some answers in the book *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette (HarperCollins, 1990). This book was introduced to me by my spiritual friend, Everett Thomas, who writes about these ideas this issue, starting on page 8. While these ideas have been most fully developed in relation to men, they can also be applied to women.

Authors Moore and Douglas say that within humans there are primordial energies that manifest themselves in at least four "archetypes." Two are more masculine in nature: king (parent) and warrior. Two are more feminine: magician (healer) and lover. Each of us has all these energies, though one may be more predominant than the others. Or we may be called on to use one energy more than we use the others at different times in our lives.

Extrapolating from my knowledge of the king, warrior, magician and lover operating in me, I begin to see more of the image of God that I have been created in.

Thus when one of my children comes to me asking questions that make me answer in terms of a larger perspective, I am using my king or ordering energy. When I fight for a cause, such as peacemaking or anti-racism, I am using warrior energy. The magician or healer within me responds when someone comes to me for advice or counsel. And it is lover energy that has me climbing on my bicycle on a warm summer afternoon to enjoy the hills of western Pennsylvania.

This understanding of myself in terms of archetypal energies has also been helpful to me in understanding others—particularly when I get into conflict. When someone opposes me and I get upset, is it because they are destroying the orderly world I have set up as king? Or are they challenging the warrior in me, threatening one of my cherished causes?

Extrapolating from my knowledge of the king, warrior, magician and lover operating in me, I begin to see more of the reflection of the image of God in which I have been created. For example, God as king or father or mother is the divine archetype I am most familiar with—indeed, the one found most often in the Bible. This is the God who orders the world, helping us to make sense out of the chaos.

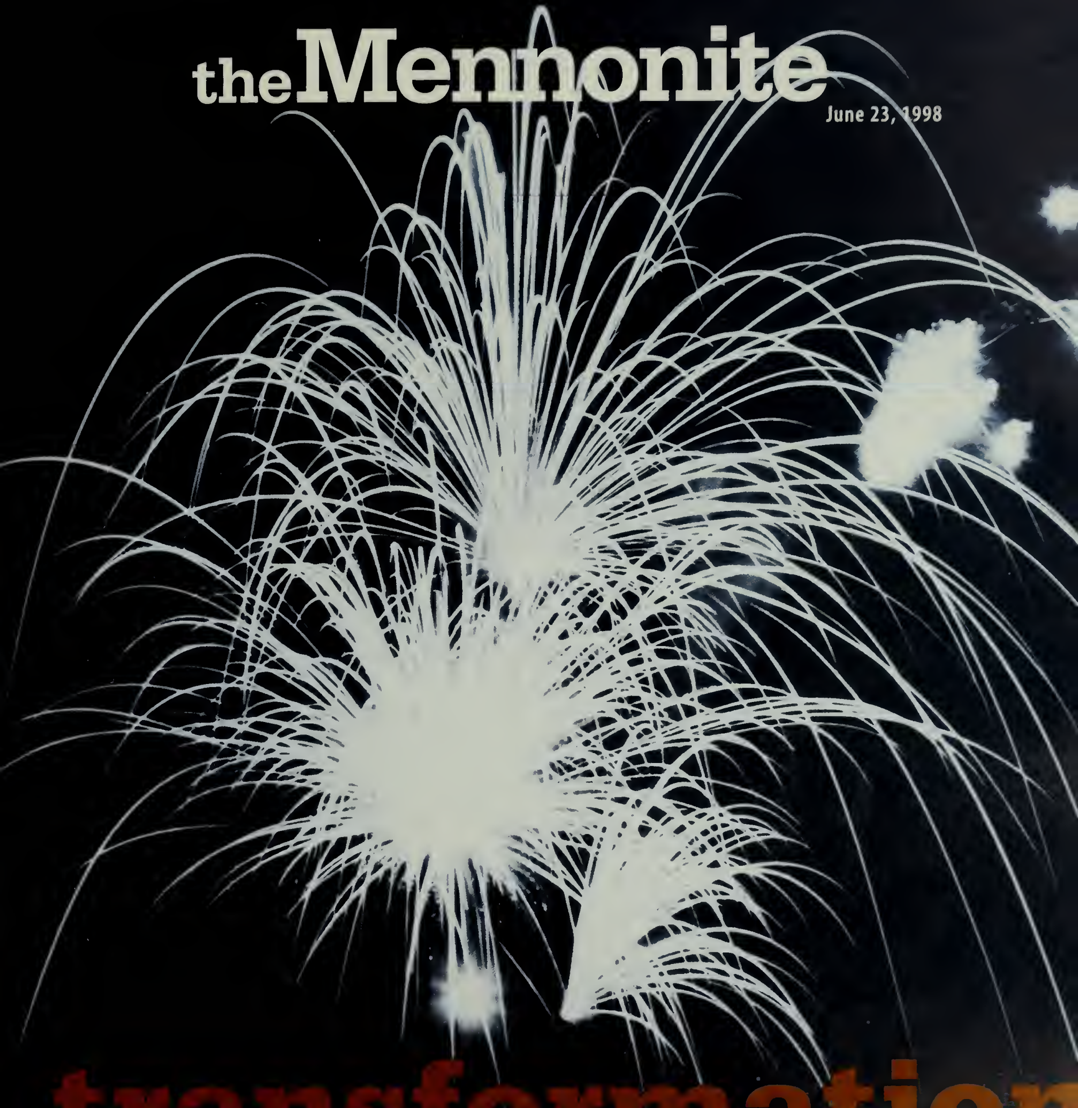
But our God is also a warrior—passionate for justice, kindness and humility (Micah 6:8). And, if I would be honest, I must admit that it is to God as healer or magician that I tend to pray most often. God as lover is the archetypal energy I'm most unaccustomed to, though more and more I'm learning that when I am quiet, God will say to me, "I love you."

Archetypes are just one of many filters we can apply to knowledge about ourselves—and about others. Joan Chittister in *Heart of Flesh,* quoted by Gordon Houser in Mediaculture this issue (page 15), notes that any good filter we use should make us more human, i.e., more open and compassionate, more vulnerable, less violent.

For me, knowledge of the archetypes of king, warrior, magician and lover has done just that. And, through them, I have learned a bit more of what it means to be created in the image of God, both as male and as female.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

June 23, 1998



he transformation of Independence Day

5 African-American church may lose TV voice
8 YES team leaves Indonesia early
12 The national myth of war and freedom
14 Being a prophet can be dangerous

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Ways of violence, ways of peace

As a mother of two young children and as a pastor's wife, I am deeply grieved to hear of the recent school shootings. My grieving, however, turned to anger when I heard and read about the Canby (Ore.) High School basketball poster ("No Minor Thing," May 19). It seems to me that we have not only a nation of parentless children to raise but also parentless parents. My husband and I recently took in a mother and three young boys. During their time with us, I found myself parenting the mother more than the children.

I am thankful for people such as Glen Guyton ("Make Room for the Spirit," May 19), who recently left the Air Force for a career in youth ministry. He brings a unique perspective to us in sharing about his choosing the Air Force because of its affordable education. If we want our children to choose the way of peace, then our institutions need to make education more available and more affordable.

Do not be too proud to think that our small towns, Mennonite churches and Christian families are immune to what society offers.—*Denise Goertzen, Goessel, Kan.*

We dress our youth in combat gear and give them guns, telling them that the way to resolve conflict is through violence. Then we wonder why youth are carrying guns and using them in our schools and homes. We must work hard at teaching alternative ways to handling disagreements in our churches, homes and society. I commend those who took an active stand, voicing their concerns with Canby High School officials. May God give us the wisdom and courage to address such issues as they arise in our communities, giving us the opportunity to show another way. —*Leroy Mast, Hammondsport, N.Y.*

Church and the single person

The issue on singleness (May 26) came at a great time as I attend the summer weddings of my peers. I graduated from Hesston (Kan.) College and was fortunate enough to know Mariann Martin and to have her as a role model in my Mennonite singleness. As a student at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., I am surrounded by many singles and couples who support each other in our walks with Christ. I am encouraged and nourished by my sisters and brothers every day and do not feel I am living the less-than-ideal in terms of earthly companionship.

It disappoints me, then, to look at the cover of *The Mennonite* to find the word "singleness" and a huge picture portraying loneliness to its core. What are we trying to say? Would it not be better, relating to the articles, to show a picture of single people in the midst of a positive setting doing a positive, active, worthwhile thing? When we are writing about reversing the stereotypes and assumptions about singles in the church, it would be great to illustrate that in a more creative and accurate way. —*Adam S. Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

When I read the articles on singleness in the Mennonite church, it reminded me why I haven't attended church for the last four years. My beliefs remain the same. I continue to pray, read and worship, only I do these things alone instead of with a community of believers. Four years ago, I ended a relationship that I believed would lead to a wonderful lifelong commitment. When that part of my life ended, I simply couldn't face the baby showers and weddings anymore. I have spent a great deal of time since then struggling with what God has planned for my life. I have learned to rejoice in the life I have rather than mourn for what I don't have. I found J. Lorne Peachey's editorial the most encouraging in my daily walk with singleness. The whole issue has made me think about getting up and going to church on Sunday.—*Lorie J. Miller, Indianapolis*

I am single and always have been. I'm a mature woman and enjoy when single folks are given recognition. Mariann Martin's "Quick Comebacks" were excellent. Thanks for making me feel special.—*Mary H. Moyer, Hatfield, Pa.*

Take more time for integration concerns

We have spent a number of Sundays discussing the issue of General Conference Mennonite Church (GC)-Mennonite Church (MC) integration and have some concerns. The impetus for this discussion has been South Central Conference's action against Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan., because the congregation acted on its belief that the church is to be an inclusive, inviting body seeking to follow Christ.

The GC and MC general boards have approved appointing a group to work at membership in the new denomination. Does this mean that not all churches which are currently

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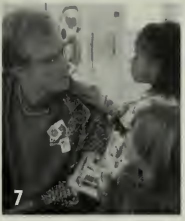

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

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s say readers say

members of GC and MC area conferences will be part of the new denomination? Our class members assumed they would.

With the Mennonite Church having a centralized polity and the General Conference Mennonite Church having a decentralized polity, how will controversial issues be handled? We feel some anxiety because of our fear as to how issues of inclusiveness will be dealt with, such as women in ministry, homosexuals, divorced people, those in biracial marriages, those who have had abortions. What other groups will we decide to exclude?

We feel it important for individual congregations to have delegate representation so the will of God can be discerned in community. If people do not feel a connection to their conferences and/or the denomination because of no representation, there will be little incentive to support the conference and/or denomination.

We urge the Integration Committee and the leaders of the denominations to allow more time for the people at the congregational level to discuss these differences and provide some feedfack. We have seen some positive efforts toward integration. Let's not push total integration prematurely only to find ourselves with splits occurring.—*New Creation Sunday School Class, First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kan.*

Community's importance

A reader questioned the inclusion of Readers Say, especially at the beginning of each issue (Readers Say, May 19). Please continue this practice. We are a community of readers, and each person's response is needed. Placing the letters at the beginning is an effective way to demonstrate the importance of this community.—*Laura H. Weaver, Evansville, Ind.*

Cover photo
by Religious News Service

Incomplete history

I was troubled by the incomplete history presented in "Worker Joins Crusade of Apology" (May 19). Has no one read enough history to remember that the Crusades came right in the middle of 1,000 years of Islamic invasions of Europe? Neither the Christians nor the Muslims had any monopoly on brutality. In addition, many people of European background today would probably find they had ancestors on both sides of the conflict. The same goes for present-day people in the Middle East.

Does this mean that Islamic representatives should apologize to Europeans for the medieval past? No. I don't see any reason why people today should apologize for what nominal Christians and nominal Muslims did to each other 1,000 years ago.—*John D. Thiesen, Newton, Kan.*

Fundamentalist influence

In response to Eleanor Kaufman's request to trace fundamentalist influences on Mennonites (Readers Say, May 19), it is important to report that Mennonite fundamentalism goes back to Menno Simons' prophetic "Fundamentboek" of 1539-40 and Dirk Philips' "teachings of all things." These opened American Mennonites to the Fundamentalist publications of 1909. At the 1936 Mennonite World Conference assembly, Harold S. Bender reported that all American Mennonites were conservative with an evangelical theology and had viewed the Fundamentalist reaction to Modernism with sympathy.

Is Kaufman fully justified in so confidently assuming: (1) that only literalist and unscientific fundamentalists do not not share her application of Christian principles to sexual orientation; (2) that the current cultural consensus about homosexual orientation is based on pure science and not ideology; and (3) that sexual mores which express whatever sexual orientation are God's will? Finally, does Kaufman not appear to ignore the philosophically defended, idolatrous transcendence of eroticism and its subservient powers within our dominant American culture?—*David A. Shank, Sturgis, Mich.*

> **Understanding how fundamentalism affects our interpretation of Scripture may shed some light on the deep divisions . . . over the matter of sexual orientation.**
>
> —*Eleanor Kaufman, Readers Say, May 19*

Grateful Dead clarification

As a speaker and writer, it's always instructive to hear what others understand you to have said and written. In response to my article "Do Not Hold Me" (April 7), Hans Wenger understood me to have meant, "Today [Jesus would] have a bandana, a Grateful Dead T-shirt and a weedwacker"—brackets his—to which he took offense (Readers Say, May 5). Two more reader responses (June 5) prompt my own input concerning my controversial sentence.

I did not intend what Wenger understood. I was attempting to offer a modern image for a groundskeeper/gardener whom Mary, apparently with some reason, took Jesus to be. I did not intend to draw a direct parallel between the not-yet-ascended Lord and the image offered. Rereading my article, however, I concede that it could be construed that way.

In addition, Wenger suggested that the resurrected Jesus was too holy for Mary to touch. My own assessment is the opposite: It's precisely because Jesus was not too holy to hold that necessitated his giving her an explicit command not to do so.

I appreciate the opportunity to be part of a community of interpretation and affirm readers' input as vital exchange. I apologize for any unintended offense. I meant nothing inappropriate or unscholarly toward the readership or my Lord.—*David A. Stevens, Blooming Glen, Pa.*

Out of place

Monty Ledford's letter (May 12) seemed so out of place in your Christian magazine. Is this the spirit in which we debate controversial issues in the church? Prophetic and provocative voices are one thing; while they challenge and critique, they also add something which edifies and builds up. But such unfounded allegations as found in Ledford's letter regarding certain groups in society and, on top of that, calling others "fool" goes quite against our biblical (Matthew 5:22) and Anabaptist principles. I pray that we in the body of Christ find better ways to spend our time than writing—and printing—such letters.—*Tim Cooper, Boise, Idaho*

Powerful business

I was glad to read George Lehman's discussion of power (Speaking Out, June 2), a subject I often contemplate. I was also glad to see the article written by a business professor rather than a religion or communication professional. How about a series by our scientists on what they could tell us about God's universe? Or by our mathematicians?—*Susan Sommer, Tremont, Ill.*

Wise words and spirit

Thanks to Omar Eby for some wise words (Word and Spirit, May 12). In response to his "The Cravings of Our Little Egos," I said a resounding amen. "A Beauty on the Dark Body of a Common Thing" prompted a resolution to refrain from maligning the lowly grackle and his ilk.—*Ada Schrock, Salisbury, Pa.*

Decision to pull plug on Virginia TV station prompts protests

Steve Fannin

TV
GENESIS PRAYER MARCH
Sponsored by NAACP & Genesis TV7 Coalition

Protesters march through Hampton, Va., May 31 in opposition to the local cable system's plans to drop Genesis TV from its service. The station, the only one in the state owned by African-Americans, carries regular programs from Calvary Community Church, a predominantly African-American Mennonite congregation in Hampton.

HAMPTON, Va.—The cable system operators say it is a business decision. But Calvary Community Church, a predominantly African-American Mennonite congregation, is facing the probable loss of its television ministry as if it were a civil rights protest.

Atlanta-based Cox Cablevision, which recently acquired the Hampton cable system, is set to drop Genesis TV, a low-power station carrying religious and family programming. Genesis TV, which also has a large collection of black gospel music videos, is the only African-American-owned TV station in Virginia.

Cox, which is realigning the local system to carry the same programming as it does regionally, says Genesis TV does not draw enough viewers to continue carrying it. "Our surveys show that people who can see it now are not watching it and would prefer other programming services," says Cox spokesperson Ellen East. "If the people who can see it now aren't watching it, we would be reluctant to offer it system wide."

But supporters say there is a need for the station. "My personal sense is that if you have a locally owned TV station, owned and operated by African-Americans who are producing positive images of African-Americans, ... it gives a broad power base to a voice that is not only moral but empowering a disenfranchised people," says Leslie Francisco, pastor of Calvary, which is a member of Virginia Conference.

Joining Calvary in protest are other religious and civic leaders and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Cox originally planned to start dropping Genesis TV on June 1 but has not done so yet. East says it will start in the next several weeks.

Death knell? Joan and Kenneth Wright, who are ministers of media at Calvary, left NASA four years ago to start Genesis TV. It is often referred to as "Calvary's station," carrying programs from the congregation—including Sunday services and Francisco answering viewers' questions—and working with other Mennonite groups in the Tidewater region. At Cox's urging, the Wrights say, they have made expensive commitments to local production, including to its studio in a former drugstore in a mall.

Being dropped from Cox does not automatically take Genesis TV off the air. But it probably would be the station's death knell, Francisco says, because of the loss of access to viewers. Co-owner Joan Wright says 78 percent of local homes would have to rig an antenna and switch back and forth between air and cable to watch Genesis TV programming.

Wright says one reason the federal government grants broadcasting licenses for low-power stations is to increase minority and local representation. But East says there is no requirement that a cable system must carry a low-power station.

Rally of support: More than 1,500 supporters participated in a May 31 rally in support of Genesis TV where speakers called for people to drop their cable TV in protest. "I call on all African-Americans and all good people to hit Cox in the pocketbook," said Celestine Carter, president of the local NAACP chapter.

Twenty-three students from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., and Goshen (Ind.) College, in town for a transcultural seminar, circulated in the crowd, gathering names of people willing to drop their cable service. "The sense of community is impressive," said Goshen senior Jayne Fought-Weigel. "It was a real privilege to be part of it."

The rally also drew support from state and city government leaders. "This is about freedom; this is about economic reciprocity," said W. Henry Maxwell, a state senator.

Francisco says protests will be organized so Cox will lose a group of customers in the Genesis TV viewing area every day the station is not on. He suggests that Cox customers and others outside the local area also protest. "It would be very positive," Francisco says, "if Mennonites across the country would start a letter campaign and write [Cox] and alert them to the fact that they are aware of the injustice that is taking place in the Hampton Roads area."—*Steve Fannin*

Genesis TV gives a broad power base to a voice that is not only moral but empowering a disenfranchised people.

—*Leslie Francisco*

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

Coats of many colors

Lancaster, Pa., artist Nigel Green (left) and Lancaster Mennonite High School student Funke Ojo paint a mural at the Mennonite Information Center in Lancaster. Eight students assisted Green, a member of Petra Christian Fellowship in New Holland, Pa., as part of their school's minicourse June 8-11. The 10-by-35 mural is in the lobby of the Mennonite Information Center's Hebrew Tabernacle reproduction.

Church assistance more than money

Money is needed to help people through financial difficulties. But Southside Mennonite Fellowship, Birmingham, Ala., has discovered that more is needed than just money.

The congregation offers counseling as part of its financial assistance program. "We decided [giving money] was just a Band-Aid approach," says Wally Hughart, chair of the Financial Assistance Fund. "What [people] really needed was counseling on how to manage money."

Southside helped 27 people in the first 10 months of its program.—*Solutions*

150 older adults to 'just do it'

Wellness focus of first Mennonite Senior Sports Classic

GOSHEN, Ind.—The comment sounds as if it was lifted right out of an athletic shoe commercial. But coming from a 93-year-old man, it doesn't seem so crass.

When asked why he is going to participate in a weekend of golf tournaments, J.J. Hostetler, who still regularly hits the links, simply replies, "I just do it."

Hostetler, of Goshen, is the oldest of about 150 people ages 50 and older who have registered for the inaugural Mennonite Senior Sports Classic, to be held June 24-27 on the Goshen College campus and other local sites. Events—which will be divided into age categories for men and women—will include basketball, bowling, bicycling, golf, horseshoes, shuffleboard, race walking, swimming, tennis, table tennis and track and field events.

The Mennonite Senior Sports Classic is sponsored by the Mennonite Association of Retired People (MARP), Mennonite Mutual Aid and Goshen College.

The idea behind the classic is to promote lifestyle and wellness issues for older adults, says Barbara Reber, MARP executive director. "It's not the competition," she says.

That is an idea that resonates with Hostetler because of the pyschological and emotional as well as physical benefits. "I don't expect to win anything," he says. "I expect to play. I expect to have fun.

"Older people need to continue their active participation as much as possible. … It keeps your motivations going."

The Mennonite Senior Sports Classic will begin June 24 with former Goshen College president and provost Henry D. Weaver speaking at the opening banquet. Weaver will also participate in the classic's recumbent bicycling event. The closing ceremony will be June 27, including a picnic and recognition of event winners.

The registered participants come from about a dozen states.—*Rich Preheim*

23 college students exploring pastorate

Twenty-three students from the U.S. General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church colleges are spending the summer exploring pastoral ministry as participants in the Ministry Inquiry Program. MIP, a joint GC-MC program, is an 11-week program placing students in internships in Mennonite congregations across the country.

Goshen (Ind.) College has 14 MIP students this summer—and 32 MIP students the past three summers. "As I listen to students talk, … they're wanting to be a part of the church's future," says Sheldon Burkhalter, Goshen director of church relations.

Five students from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., are in the program this year. Bluffton (Ohio) College has three MIP students, while Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has one.

School's first Hopi teacher takes mission seriously

KYKOTSMOVI, Ariz.—Jane Polingyouma makes no bones about Hopi Mission School's reasons for existence.

"This is a Christian school, and part of our mission is to teach about God," says Polingyouma, the school's interim principal.

In 1996, she became the first full-time Hopi teacher at the school, located on the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona.

Hopi Mission School, which was started in 1951, provides education to students in kindergarten through grade six. All but four of the school's 33 students are Hopi. The school receives financial support from the Commission on Home Ministries and the American Baptists. Volunteer teachers come through Mennonite Voluntary Service, a joint program of CHM and Mennonite Board of Missions. Four of the current teachers plus a maintenance worker are MVS workers.

Polingyouma was born and raised on the reservation. "I learned about God as a child," she says. "My mother was a Christian, a Baptist. But we went to the Mennonite church [Oraibi Mennonite Church in Kykotsmovi] because it was the only one here."

Polingyouma attended Haskell Indian High School (now Haskell University) in Lawrence, Kan., and Arizona State College (now Northern Arizona University) in Flagstaff, graduating in 1960 with a degree in secondary education. Her first job, however, was teaching first grade on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona.

Although it was against school rules, she let her students speak Navajo. When the principal of the school realized that Polingyouma's class was learning English faster than any of the others, the policy against Navajo was relaxed.

Polingyouma returned to the Hopi Reservation in 1964. Since then, she has taught at a school for the deaf and blind, provided tutoring for high school students and spent 20 years teaching at a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school on the Hopi reservation.

Due to political changes at the BIA school, she was forced to retire in 1996. Polingyouma came to Hopi Mission School at the beginning of the 1996 school year as a first-grade substitute teacher and ended up staying when the regular teacher did not return. She became interim principal last summer when the school was left without a principal at the last minute.

Polingyouma, who also continues to teach first grade, plans to return to the classroom full time next fall. "I'd rather be with the children," she says. "My training is to be a teacher, and I feel like I can contribute more to the students in the classroom."

She and her husband, a self-employed farmer who also works with Hopi cultural preservation, have two children who both graduated from Hopi Mission School.

The school has always had a reputation for academic excellence, Polingyouma says. "The atmosphere is so different from a large school: small class size, dedicated teachers and ability to be flexible because of those things," she says. "Everyone works together. We know that we're here for each other. And the fact that it is a Christian school makes a difference."
—Melanie Zuercher of GCMC and MBM news services

The fact that it is a Christian school makes a difference.

—Jane Polingyouma

MCC program's rug producer honored for labor practices

EPHRATA, Pa.—While many Oriental rugs sold in North America are made by youth under virtual slave conditions, those found in Ten Thousand Villages stores are not. Now the producer of those rugs sold by Mennonite Central Committee's job-creation program has been recognized for its efforts.

JAKCISS, which produces carpets in Pakistan using only fairly paid adult labor, was honored by RUGMARK, a national consumer-education campaign dedicated to raising awareness of the exploitation of children who are working, often as bonded laborers, in carpet production.

RUGMARK-approved producers agree not to employ children less than 14 years old and to pay adults a fair wage. Ten Thousand Villages has carried JAKCISS carpets for 15 years.*—Jenni Leister for MCC News Service*

MBM photo by Wayne Gehman

Small talk

Service Adventure participant Ted Spangler (left) engages in conversation with two pupils in a Head Start program in Philippi, W.Va. Spangler, of Lancaster, Pa., recently completed his 10-month assignment in Philippi. Service Adventure is a joint program of Mennonite Board of Missions and Commission on Home Ministries. New units in Albuquerque, N.M.; Johnstown, Pa.; and Lethbridge, Alta., have been added for next year, bringing the total to 10.

MEDA member makes like a tree and leaves to start own paper-making business

WINNIPEG–Heidi Reimer-Epp had a dream job a year ago.

Through her work in international marketing and business development for a major pharmaceutical firm, the Winnipeg resident got to travel around the world visiting distributors and negotiating contracts. The future seemed bright and secure.

Then she gave it up to join her mother, Mary, in a fledgling business making paper out of natural materials and scraps.

It all started with Mary, who works part-time as pastor of small groups and worship at Winnipeg's Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church. For relaxation, she made paper for herself and friends. Soon others wanted to buy her unique handmade paper, and the orders started piling up. Heidi began to help Mary, and before long, both their homes were filled with paper and paper-making supplies.

In December 1996, Heidi and Mary decided to form Botanical PaperWorks in Winnipeg. Heidi took a big step of faith in May 1997, quitting her job to work at papermaking full time.

"It was a hard decision to give up the salary and security that came with my other job," she says. "But I wanted to do something where I could use more of my creativity plus make things that are in line with my values."

Now Heidi spends all her time either making paper or thinking about making paper. In fall, for example, most people walk in the woods to admire the leaves and smell the crisp fall air. But she sees such walks as chances to gather raw materials for paper made of fall leaves.

"At least the raw material is free," Heidi says.

In addition to leaves, Botanical PaperWorks makes paper containing scrap denim, flower petals, blueberries, raspberries, rhubarb, celery and scraps of money. One customer in the United States buys paper containing the seeds of wildflowers.

Heidi and Mary joke that they would like to try paper with mosquitos in it. They think it would be a big seller in places plagued by the little critters—if only there was a way to harvest enough of them. "Slapping mosquitos on your arm isn't an easy or quick way to build up inventory," Heidi says.

Heidi and Mary find that running their own company gives them a chance to live out their values. For example, papermaking helps them work to preserve the environment since many of the scrap materials they use would otherwise go into landfills.

Another value is assisting poor people, which they hope to do through Mennonite Economic Development Associates. They are currently in consultation with MEDA staff about creating a business in a Caribbean country to make paper from banana leaves.

"This has twin benefits," says Heidi, a MEDA member. "Not only does it create jobs in a country which needs them, it also protects trees. People won't chop down a tree which earns them income."

Faith is an important ingredient in their business. "At each stage along the way we have prayed for God's wisdom," says Heidi, who also is a member of Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church. "Sometimes it seems like the next step won't be possible, but then something wonderful always happens."

Looking back, Heidi says she would have "been crazy" not to leave her former job. But there is a downside: It's hard to separate business and pleasure. "A canoe trip is never just a canoe trip anymore," she says. "It's a harvesting trip."—*John Longhurst of MEDA News Service*

Logo unveiled for St. Louis 99

The logo has been unveiled for St. Louis 99, the joint adult and youth conventions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, to be held July 23-27, 1999. The designer is Ken Gingerich, art director for Mennonite Board of Missions. The convention theme is "Come to the River."

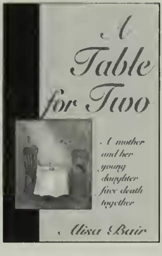
YES team ends Indonesia assignment early

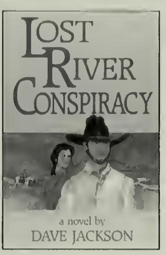
SALUNGA, Pa.—An Eastern Mennonite Missions' Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team has ended its assignment in Indonesia three months early due to the nation's conflict.

The team of two Americans and two Indonesians was working with two congregations of the GKMI Indonesian Mennonite synod in outreach to university students in Salatiga on the island of Central Java. The assignment was to be for eight months. The Americans left Indonesia on May 23 and do not plan to return. One of the Indonesians will complete the outreach project.

During the upheaval, there were some demonstrations at the local university, the military had entered Salatiga and a nearby town was looted. Reports indicated the looters would next head to Salatiga, but that never materialized. The decision to end the assignment was made in consultation with parents and GKMI leaders.—*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service.*

Suggestions for Summer Reading





A Table for Two: A mother and her young daughter face death together . . . by Alisa Bair

The mysteries of life and faith underlie this true story of a family losing its youngest member to cancer. As bewildering is the child's extraordinary perception and her character, which takes on shining power as her body loses strength.Vividly written. $8.95, paperback

Lost River Conspiracy, a novel by Dave Jackson

A gripping historical adventure, set in the West in the middle of a conflict with the Modoc Indians. Young Abe Miller weighs his Mennonite upbringing against his newfound love. $8.95, paperback

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Jonas and Sally, a novel by Rich Foss

Surprised to be called to save this virgin island, surprised to be loving such a sensual and stubborn woman, Jonas brings his youthful mix of complete certainty and utter ambiguity to his unsettling task. *"A novel of redemption and hope."* —Larry Woiwode, novelist. $19.95, hardcover

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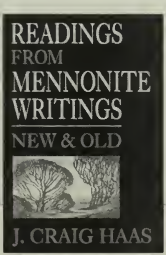

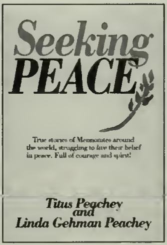
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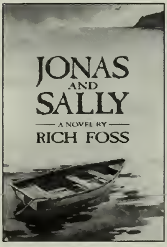

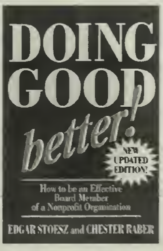
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Transform Independence Day

What must we do, how must we be, to serve as salt and light in this world?

by Walter S. Friesen

How do we celebrate Independence Day, we who are grateful citizens of the United States but also citizens of another commonwealth, baptized into the body of Christ? Who of us Anabaptists, committed to peacemaking and nonviolent resistance to evil, does not squirm when we experience profound gratitude for the freedoms and opportunities of our beloved country yet know with a deepening conviction that it is not force and military might that have purchased freedom and peace?

And who of us, committed to Jesus Christ as Lord, does not squirm and groan inwardly when we experience sisters and brothers in Christ making political initiatives that seem to herald a new theocracy? We hardly know what to do when our treasured biblical texts and moral principles are used to impose Christian values on our fellow citizens.

What must we do, how must we be, to serve as salt and light in this world?

Removing the national flag from our places of worship is a useful gesture, pointing in the direction of God's sovereignty, but it does not begin to outline the positive demands of our dual citizenship. Nor will our rejection of fireworks on the Fourth of July fulfill our calling. Even our choosing to work out obligations to our government in alternative service as conscientious objectors to war has not and will not release us from the tension of our two allegiances. And we cannot escape by singing, "This world is not my home, I'm just a-passin' through," for we know that God loves the world he has created and sustains it in steadfast goodwill. So we ponder what it means to be fully citizens of this world and fully citizens of an alternative kingdom. How can we embrace the world God loves with hearts and minds courageous enough to firmly reject both faces of power—submission and domination—and enter into our citizenship with transformed and transforming lives of faith?

I propose that my local Mennonite congregation enter into and actively reshape the next Fourth of July weekend into a celebration of the ways and alternatives of peacemaking and active nonviolent resistance to evil, all the while rejoicing in freedom and the wonderful gift of government by the people.

I want the church to lead the way in gratitude for our country and the opportunities we enjoy. It will not do for us to downplay or neglect joy and thanks on Independence Day. That does nothing to make us better citizens of earth or of heaven. Chronic complaint against government is no more fruitful for national health than chronic self-derision promotes good spiritual and emotional health in individuals. I want the church community to honor liberty and government.

But in that celebration I want to separate the truth of our freedom from the lie that liberty and justice are won ultimately with sword and combat. I want the church to lead the way in transforming Independence Day from a celebration of military victory to a celebration of the greater-than-military-power of justice, peace and nonviolent resistance to evil. I want our church to expose the oppressive lie that connects personal happiness and opportunity to violence in our culture. The real fight for justice, for opportunity, for freedom, for hope is in connecting these priceless treasures to their real sources: civility, respect, self-control, self-sacrificing compassion and nonviolent noncompliance with oppression and injustice.

Real freedom: Our sanctification of war has pulled us repeatedly into the struggle for justice in other nations, nearly always offering our violent solutions and rarely offering the peaceful, life-giving methods that real peace and real freedom should be expected to offer. Although we dress up our global presence in the name of freedom and peace, our export is often violence via military might to protect our global economic interests.

Is the violent solution to problems now offered as constant fodder on TV not an extension of our national spirit, which connects personal liberty to the annihilation of people we declare our enemy? Is our mounting violence not the fruit of our revolutionary history?

Jim Juhnke, professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and others present growing evidence that the War of Independence nearly cost the colonies all the

I want the church to lead the way in transforming Independence Day from a celebration of military victory to a celebration of the greater-than-military-power of justice, peace and nonviolent resistance to evil.

RNS

freedom and independence they had already won through nonviolent noncompliance and artful resistance to the British efforts to impose regulation and taxation without representation.

No American schoolchildren get through the elementary grades without hearing about the Boston Tea Party. Refusing to pay the tax, Puritans threw the tea into the harbor. This act of defiance put King George III and his parliament into a fit, and they decided to punish the colonists all the more.

But who has heard of the Philadelphia Tea Party? About the same time as the Boston Tea Party, a British ship loaded with tea was to be off-loaded (and taxed) in Philadelphia. Here Joseph Galloway, Benjamin Franklin and the Quakers met the captain and said, "You can't unload, but we'll negotiate with you. We'll work with you on a solution." They finally persuaded the captain by paying his expenses for returning the tea to England—and carrying a compelling message to the British authorities.

We have studied the Declaration of Independence, which, accompanied by the passionate pamphlets of Thomas Paine and the fiery oratory of Patrick Henry, moved both the British and the colonists toward war. But few know that in the fall of 1774 at the first Continental Congress, Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania proposed a plan to revise the constitution of the British Empire. Galloway's plan allowed all parties to save face and resolve the major issues. He called for an American branch of parliament, a "Grand Council" with representatives appointed by each of the several colonial assemblies. For a law to be passed it would have to clear both the British Parliament and the American Grand Council. The American Council would be presided over by a "President General," appointed by the king.

Many greeted the plan as "almost perfect" and debated it for days. In the end it failed by one vote. The opposition wanted total autonomy for their colonies within the empire, freedom without responsibility.

The Galloway plan was not perfect, and if enacted it would have required much careful work. But a scenario of conflict resolution averting war in the 1770s is, as Juhnke says, not only imaginable but also realistic.

These examples serve merely as openings for us to see that liberty, justice and freedom need not be connected to war and violence.

Let us begin the long, imaginative task of transforming our nation's most sacred holiday into a festival of peace. The raw ingredients are there in untold stories. There are historical events that can be ritualized and dramatized. There is a message of inclusiveness and compassion for all who are victims of violence—both the abused and the abusers.

The Bible offers precedence for this. Passover as shaped, ritualized and energized by the Hebrews was their Day of Independence, marking the exodus from Egypt and the beginnings of their peoplehood. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem and taught in the temple at the great feast of Passover, the Holy Spirit used him to reshape and transform the Passover. Jesus became our Passover Lamb, and Communion ritualizes that sacred act.

Day of the Spirit: Pentecost was first a primitive ritual offering the first fruit of the harvest to the Canaanite gods of the soil. Jews took over the pagan ritual and transformed it into their second most important holiday, the Festival of Booths, which required giving firstfruits tithes. Then on a later Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended as power, understanding, communication and joy upon the gathered disciples, transforming that event into a day of the Spirit, releasing the radical meaning of Christ's life and death. Jesus in his resurrection has become the firstfruits of all who are dead.

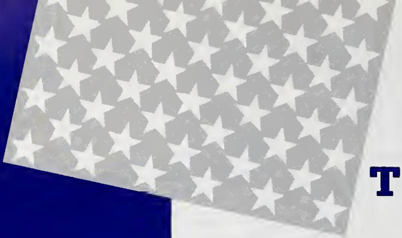
As we allow the Holy Spirit to use us in transforming Independence Day, we can be sure that it will not be our doing but the Lord's.

Later, Christ-Mass was a religious take-over of the pagan holiday celebrating the winter solstice. And in recent years many Mennonite churches have already reshaped Memorial Day. The precedents are clear. Let us begin.

But let us be transformed first. As we allow the Holy Spirit to use us in transforming Independence Day, we can be sure that it will not be our doing but the Lord's. If we see ourselves as the source, we are guilty of putting Christ into our service, reversing the divine order and crucifying him again.

Revisionist history, carefully documented by passionate and compassionate pacifists like Jim Juhnke, professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., outlines the evidence that the War for Independence set up conditions for increased violence. The war prolonged and enlarged the institution of slavery. The war encouraged violence all across the western frontier, pitting outlaw against government. The war justified the decimating of Native people wholesale.

Walter S. Friesen is a semi-retired educator, counselor and pastor living in Newton, Kan., working part-time as chaplain at Bethesda Home, Goessel, Kan., and serving as pastoral care coordinator for Central Homecare and Hospice, Newton.



The mythica society

How do we counter the national myth that links war and freedom?

by J. Denny Weaver

Seven years ago, when George Bush addressed the U.S. Congress to announce the end of hostilities in the Gulf War, he referred to an incident many of us had seen on TV. A video clip showed Iraqi soldiers kissing the shoes of American soldiers while a U.S. soldier assured them, "You're OK now." According to Bush, that incident showed the true character of Americans—their compassion.

Powerful myths shape the public ethos and the national self-perception of society in the United States. Those same myths shape foreign policy and drive the actions of the U.S. government. The president serves as the premier spokesperson, articulator and example of these myths. George Bush's statement about the "compassion" of Americans was myth-driven.

On the Fourth of July, an important day in the nation's mythology, let's reflect on the national myth that shapes the ethos of the United States.

The U.S. myth includes the sense of being a predestined, elect people with a unique, God-given destiny, along with the belief that success in the nation's endeavors proves divine favor on the nation. Thus those who carry out those national endeavors must be virtuous. Further, an important part of the myth is a millennial outlook, the assumption that a past or present evil is on the point of being overcome, so that the nation stands on the verge of a new era of unprecedented opportunity, goodness and prosperity.

The U.S. myth includes the sense of being a predestined, elect people with a unique, God-given destiny, along with the belief that success in the nation's endeavors proves divine favor on the nation.

The first version of these claims occurred in the mission statements of the Pilgrims and Puritans, some of North America's earliest English residents. For these settlers, the claims had a religious and theological cast: They were God's new, chosen people, escaping from evil England as ancient Israel had escaped from Egypt, and they were destined by God to inherit the promised land of the New World. They intended to base their civil laws on God's revealed law, the Bible, and believed that to disregard that law threatened the special destiny of the new society. The Puritans assumed that Christianity and the Christian church encompass all of society.

Later, official statements kept the Puritan worldview but cast it in more secular language. In the Declaration of Independence of 1776, for example, the Christian God became Nature's God, the Creator, Supreme Judge of the World and divine providence. Laws were no longer based on God's revealed law but were protected, "inalienable rights," a secular way to identify innate rights without mentioning God.

New epoch: In the 19th century, the sense of being a predestined, chosen people became a "manifest destiny" for the European settlers to possess the continent and eliminate its native inhabitants. The sense of standing on the verge of a new epoch in God's history was restated in secular terms as the "novus ordo seclorum," or new order of the ages, as it says on the great seal of the United States.

In this century, the sense of eternally standing on the verge of a new age is reflected in the slogans that popularly identify presidential regimes: "new deal," "fair deal," "new frontier," "great society." George Bush was probably unaware of the myth-driven pattern his "new world order" fit into.

An armed struggle plays an important role in the myth. War gives birth to the divinely sanctioned people and brings them into the new era. Thus weapons and war preserved the Puritans from the natives, whose land "God was giving them." In 1776, war supposedly freed the colonists from the clutches of the evil British. This war cemented for the U.S. psyche the idea that war and freedom are linked, that war is the way to remove the last evil and speed up the coming of the new era.

The national myth follows a cyclical pattern. It begins with the assumption of a unified vision for the society. Eventually the unified vision is seen to be fragmented. Blame for the breakup is placed on the abandonment of the "old" values. Finally, an enemy is found who represents all the evils that appear to threaten the fragmented society. Eventually it seems that unity and the coming of the new age can be speeded up by the violent elimination of the enemy.

That cycle has played out several times in U.S. history. After 1776 came the Civil War, supposedly fought to eliminate slavery and preserve the sacred unity of the nation. Slavery was judged the evil that divided the nation. In this century, wars have been fought to eliminate the kaiser and make the world safe for democracy and to eliminate the scourge of Hitler and the Axis powers. More recently, war was supposed to inaugurate a "new world order" by eliminating Saddam Hussein.

The national myth of goodness and chosenness makes it convenient to forget that in 1776 only one-third of the population actually supported the rebellion, and the taxes the colonists resented paying were being collected to pay for debts incurred in the war 13 years earlier when the colonists had considered Britain their savior from the French. Conveniently forgotten is the fact that outlawing slavery did nothing to eliminate the racism that underlay the institution of slavery and that continued to characterize a nation that had no intention of treating blacks as equals. The myth allows modern people to forget that possession of great quantities of armaments was a principal cause of World War I and that the harsh settlement imposed on Germany after the war produced resentment that came to fruition in World War II.

A different war: The Vietnam War did not fit the mythical pattern. It showed that the nation was not invincible. The atrocities televised on the evening news disproved mythical assumptions about national goodness. This war ushered in no new era the nation could be proud of but led to suspicion and distrust of government and to doubts about national direction. Because this war did not fit the mythical pattern, it has greatly troubled the United States for the last quarter century. Other challenges to the mythical pattern of goodness and invincibility came from the civil rights movement, which shattered the myth of a moral society in which all people were accepted equally, and the Watergate affair, which destroyed the myth that the nation's leaders are moral examples who epitomize the nation's ideals.

All these factors played a role in the United States' rush into the war in the Persian Gulf. George Bush, who let it be known that he had spent time in prayer with Billy Graham before declaring war, epitomized the American myth when, after the Gulf War, he declared that we have "excised Vietnam" and affirmed that a soldier's words portray the compassion of the United States. After the embarrassment of Vietnam, a victory in the Gulf enabled the United States to claim again to be the invincible manifestation of a secular but ultimate worldwide mission.

The United States' national mythology needs an enemy to blame for its problems. How else account for the problems of the elect, invincible and righteous nation? For about half of the 20th century, the Soviet Union and its satellites in Eastern Europe served in the enemy role. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, it has been necessary—in the national mythology—to create a new enemy. For a moment it seemed Iraq and Islam might become the enemy of choice. But Iraq was not a formidable enough opponent. More recently, some of the search for an enemy has turned inward. The people and groups now blamed for the nation's problems include illegal aliens, the poor and criminals.

Scapegoat: The vehemence of public rhetoric against aliens, both legal and illegal, and the harshness of moves in Congress to cut programs for aliens and the poor, increase the frequency of capital punishment and deny human rights protection to homosexuals reflects the search for an enemy—a scapegoat, someone perceived to be different—on whom to blame the nation's ills.

As a specific example, the mythical need for an enemy and the nation's supreme faith in violence to solve problems together have succeeded in placing the blame for the huge national debt on such social programs as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (commonly called "welfare") rather than on the military—even though more than half the national budget goes to the military, which also wastes huge amounts in cost overruns and grossly inflated prices for ordinary items, while AFDC uses 1 percent of the federal budget and 2 percent of state budgets (statistics from CDF Reports 16.4, March 1995, 8).

We Mennonites need to know who we are—to preserve our tradition of nonviolence, which is based in the story of Jesus Christ, and to resist the national myths that link goodness and violence. We need to support social programs and resist the myths that blame the nation's woes—such as a high budget deficit—on "illegal aliens" and the poor. We must give a living witness to an alternative way, a way that exemplifies a God of peace, a God of compassion for the suffering and oppressed.

J. Denny Weaver is chair of the religion department at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

We Mennonites need to know who we are—to preserve our tradition of nonviolence, which is based in the story of Jesus Christ, and to resist the national myths that link goodness and violence.

The task of the prophet

Lessons from Jeremiah 1:4-10 and Luke 4:21-30

by Robert L. Petersheim

As we believe in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, we know God is a safe protector. For even if living faithfully, prophetically, gets us killed, death cannot separate us from the love of God.

Faith in the living God compels us to speak the words of God, even when those words confront a society that lives in the illusion that violence can redeem. Jeremiah 1 records the commissioning of such a prophet. Luke 4 illustrates a potential result of prophetic ministry: The listeners drag the preacher to a cliff with the intent of throwing him over the edge.

We can glean several relevant truths from these texts about the task of the prophet. First, a prophet is to speak God's words. As the Lord put out his hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth, the Lord said, "Now I have put my words in your mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9).

Jesus said he only spoke what the Father instructed him to say (John 8:28).

We all have places where we are God's voice—to neighbors, co-workers and family. Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did not live in people's hearts. So one way God spoke was by sending the Spirit upon a prophet. But in the New Testament era, all believers have God's Holy Spirit within them.

We do not all have prophecy as a spiritual gift, but we all can speak the words of God. We need to understand that people will react to the message we speak—some with a warm embrace, some with violent rejection, some with apathy—but all will react.

Sometimes people react to my words because, although I am sharing the words of God, I'm not reflecting the heart of God as revealed to us in Christ. Sometimes people react to the words of God we speak because the expression is rooted in our own fears and insecurities. But there are also times that we share from God's heart of love and people still react violently. After all, Jesus, the only perfect prophet, was killed. And people started a riot after one of Paul's sermons.

God's message always ends up larger than the listeners' narrow interests. As the Lord touched the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord appointed him "over nations and over kingdoms, not only to build and to plant, but also to pluck up and pull down, to destroy and to overthrow" (Jeremiah 1:10). The Israelites would have been glad to hear that God was going to redeem them from their enemies. But they did not welcome a prophet saying God would help their enemy win.

The American public would not want to hear you say that God is going to help Iraq defeat the United States. I don't believe God will do that, but the point is, as ludicrous as it would sound to say such a thing over lunch counters, that is much like what God told Jeremiah to preach.

Jesus' message was no less offensive, once it sunk in. As Jesus spoke, people were impressed: "All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth" (Luke 4:22).

Mark Powell writes: "Most of us are able to identify ourselves as afflicted in some way. So the people of Nazareth assume Jesus means that they are the 'poor' to whom he intends to bring good news. Their reaction of violent rage comes when he turns that illusion on its head."

Jesus had put his finger on their assumption that their narrow agenda was God's agenda. Powell suggests that the story of Naaman was a favorite of Christ's listeners, since the enemy commander had to come and ask a favor of their king and of their prophet. He had to wash in their dirty Jordan River. The insinuation was, "Our God is bigger. Even our dirtiest river is better than a river of the enemy."

Love of the enemy: But Jesus spoils the story. He points out that there were lots of lepers wanting healing at the time of Elisha, but the only guy who gets healed is that enemy commander Naaman. Powell notes that with Jesus' one comment, the story came to mean exactly the opposite of what his contemporaries wanted it to mean. The story that had appeared to support the notion that "God is on our side" now revealed that "God's love is bigger than that; it's big enough to include love of the enemy."

The same point is made in God's commissioning of Jeremiah. God's purpose for helping Israel's enemies win was that Israel finally learn to reverence God alone. Then they could return to being God's trusted instrument of redemption, not only so that they could be blessed but that all peoples of the world could be blessed.

God's purpose for Christ coming into the world and letting the enemy of death win was to show that no one is outside God's love. The resurrection validates once and for all that not even death can win over God's love.

In my moderator's address at the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) of the Mennonite Church, I noted the final authority of a core values statement we developed in 1997: "We will express our love of Jesus by obeying the teachings of Jesus, including the call to nonviolence, even if it costs us our lives, knowing we share Christ's eternal inheritance."

A few people were not happy. How dare ACC frame the question of nonviolence as an issue of whether or not we love Jesus? But making nonviolence a test of whether or not we love Jesus wasn't original with us. Someone else (Jesus) said, "If you love me you will keep my commandment." That same person said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you."

The tragedy of war: What might it sound like to speak the words of God? As others bemoan the accused immorality of the U.S. president (as believers around the world should bemoan if it's true), let's include in the conversation the tragedy of war. As Christians speak out against the death of unborn children to abortion (as we should speak), let's include a time of grieving for the thousands of children who will be killed if the arsenals deployed in the Persian Gulf are released against Iraq.

I can only proclaim such truth if I know the final message of these texts, that God is able to protect me. Jesus knew this truth. The Luke 4 text follows his baptism, where a dove descended and the voice said, "You are my son … ; in you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22).

Jeremiah settled the question by faith. When he protested that he was only a child, God responded, "Do not say 'I am only a boy,' for you shall … speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you" (Jeremiah 1:7-8).

What will it take for us to believe? I remember when I faced that question in a new way. I wanted God to give me a sign—a dove, a voice, a touching of my mouth. But God wanted me to remember that the greatest sign has been given. We live on this side of the resurrection. If the resurrection of Jesus isn't a good enough sign, nothing else will do.

That is why it's a matter of faith. As we believe in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, we know God is a safe protector. For even if living faithfully, prophetically, gets us killed, death cannot separate us from the love of God. This is why the resurrection is so central to faith.

Choose faith.

Robert L. Petersheim is on staff at Teaching the Word Ministries. This article was adapted from a sermon he preached at Zion Mennonite Church, York, Pa.

Mt. Olivet Old Regular Baptist Church, Blackey, Kentucky

by Heather S. Smith

I will see you again, singing!
Those sad songs still, though
I'm sure many will say, O stop
singing so much about Death!
But even up there, the beauty
of your voice will take God
by surprise again & again, those
old voices: voice of Elwood,
voice of Almeda, voice of Ollie
& Thornton, singing testimonies,
singing Guide Me O Thou Great
Jehovah, singing Why Must I Wear
This Shroud, singing confessions,
while the crickets and frogs make
music too, & the stars speak a song
softly behind the treetops, treetops
doing what Rev. I.D. Beck would never
do: dance. But why would he, when all
the voices of the congregation fill
the body and move it like God moves?
I will see you again! Let me sing it too!

Heather S. Smith lives in Kalona, Iowa.

Toge Fujihira

Bay Area churches building for future

As part of an effort to establish stronger ties with each other and build a stronger base of new ministries, three San Francisco Bay Area Anabaptist congregations gathered together on June 14. Forty-two people from First Mennonite Church, Cupertino Chinese Mennonite Church and Fellowship in Christ Church of the Brethren met for a joint worship service. It was conducted primarily in English with some translation into Mandarin.

Pacific Southwest Conference is working with local congregations to explore church-planting possibilities in the Bay Area.

MDS responds to deadly S.D. tornado

SPENCER, S.D.—Local Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers turned out to offer assistance following the May 30 tornado that killed six and nearly wiped the small town of Spencer off the map. Because authorities barred people from coming into town, located about 30 miles north of Freeman, MDS concentrated its efforts on helping area farmers.

The National Weather Service estimates the tornado spanned 300 yards with winds as high as 200 miles an hour.—*Freeman Courier*

Drama team to examine racism

AKRON, Pa.—A five-member troupe has taken its show on the road to present original theater examining racism. The Mennonite Central Committee U.S.-sponsored Racism Drama Team started its two-month tour of the East Coast and Great Lakes on June 5 in Pittsburgh. Performances will be given in churches, camps, schools and elsewhere. The young adults on the team represent African-American, Hispanic and white racial groups. —*MCC News Service*

Ten Thousand Villages Canada shows surplus

NEW HAMBURG, Ont.—After two years of significant losses, Ten Thousand Villages Canada reports a modest surplus of $28,000 (U.S.) for the last fiscal year.

The organization, part of Mennonite Central Committee's job-creation program, had been plagued by high levels of old inventory, making it difficult to free money to buy new items. But much of it was sold in 1996 at huge discounts for a loss of $413,000 (U.S.). Ten Thousand Villages Canada was then able to re-stock with new items, which sold at better prices.—*MCC Canada News Service*

El Niño prompts MCC aid in Honduras

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has purchased 26 metric tons of beans following an emergency request for food assistance from the Honduran Brethren in Christ Church. The El Niño weather system has caused drought throughout much of Central America.

The beans, valued at nearly $25,000, should feed 378 families—about 3,630 people—for five months until the next harvest. Farmers reportedly have lost 90 percent of their corn and 80 percent of their sorghum harvests, says Ed Stamm Miller, MCC Honduras country co-representative. —*MCC News Service*

Jim Bishop

Forgive us our debt

Congregational members Rita Lehman (left) and Marcia Stutzman place pieces of the mortgage document on the fire during a June 7 ceremony celebrating the last payment on the Community Mennonite Church building, Harrisonburg, Va. The mortgage was paid off nearly two years ahead of schedule. The congregation in 1989 traded its crowded facility for a much larger building occupied by a Church of God congregation several blocks away. Community assumed a 10-year, $220,000 mortgage as part of the building exchange

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Events

Wayside Mennonite Church, Brimley, Mich., 50th anniversary celebration, July 18-19. Contact: 906-495-5472.

Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., centennial celebration, Aug. 15-16. Contact: Rebecca Leichty, 540-433-0827.

Workers

Braun, Ron, has resigned as executive vice president of Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Waterloo, Ont.

Enns-Bogoya, Lisa, was licensed May 3 as associate pastor for youth and young adults at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Kauffman, Tom, has been affirmed as conference minister for Ohio Conference.

Martin, Gary, will end a pastorate June 30 at First Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind.

Rivera, Doroteo, was licensed June 6 as pastor of Warden (Wash.) Hispanic Mission.

Sauder, Allen, has been named executive vice president for Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Waterloo, Ont.

Sawatzky, Zandra, began June 2 as secretary for Mennonite Voluntary Service, Newton, Kan.

Shull, Jeff, will begin June 28 as pastor of Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, Okla.

Wiebe, Leonard, retired June 14 as pastor of Peace Community Mennonite Church, Aurora, Colo.

Births

Bachman, Megan Danielle, March 16, to Kimberly (Roemersberger) and Phillip Bachman, Hopedale, Ill.

Fransen, Katharina Ann, April 5, to Angelika (Quitschke) and Fred Fransen, Fishers, Ind.

Hunsecker, Taylor Anne, April 21, to Jeff and Kerry (Herr) Hunsecker, Manheim, Pa.

Knieriem, Collin James, March 26, to Gloria (Mullet) and Michael Knieriem, Shipshewana, Ind.

Koehler, Aaron Matthew, May 27, to June (TerMaat) and Melvin Koehler, Rochester, Minn.

Learned, Cadence Tatum, May 2, to David and Sharon (Zehr) Learned, Lawrence, Kan.

Litwiller, Justin Jack, May 23, to Becky (Armstrong) and Jon Litwiller, Washington, Iowa.

Litwiller, Mara Erma, May 14, to Clifford and Nancy (Quisenberry) Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

Mack, Sarah Catherine, May 29, to Becky (Beyer) and Dean Mack, Telford, Pa.

Mast, Lauren Alicia, May 15, to Brian and Karen (Krause) Mast, Harrisonburg, Va.

Miller, Brandon James, May 19, to Darlene (Ruth) and James Miller, Pottstown, Pa.

Roggie, Connor James, May 18, to Brent and Sherri (Kidd) Roggie, Lowville, N.Y.

Schaffter, Jason Andrew, May 27, to Deborah (Horst) and Larry Schaffter, Sterling, Ohio.

Stutzman, Nathan Lee, May 20, to Joann (Kauffman) and Loren Stutzman, Middlebury, Ind.

Turner, Sarah Jacqueline, March 26, to Brenda (Krause) and Claude Turner, North Newton, Kan.

Werremeyer, Kevin Lee, May 22, to Shana (Mast) and Tom Werremeyer, Muscatine, Iowa.

Zehr, Irene Shank, May 27, to Kirk and Kristin (Shank) Zehr, Harrisonburg, Va.

Weddings

Barker/Hawn: William Barker Jr., Waynesboro, Va., and Sara Hawn, Waynesboro, May 24, by Stanlee Kauffman.

Carr/Hershey: Michael Carr, Washington, D.C., and Julie Hershey, Cochranville, Pa., May 23, by Rick Conrad.

Davis/Koehn: Ward Davis, Kansas City, Kan., and Erica Koehn, Greensburg, Kan., May 23, by Torrey Ball.

Esbenshade/Keith: Wade Esbenshade, New Holland, Pa., and Jennifer Keith, Ephrata, Pa., May 25, by Clyde Kratz.

Flynn/Slagel: Shannon Flynn, Washington, Iowa, and Mike Slagel, Washington, May 30, by Tim Detweiler.

Graber/Nofziger: Katherine Graber, Washington, Iowa, and Jonathan Nofziger, Wauseon, Ohio, April 25, by Keith Graber Miller.

Heistand/Lehman: Jeffrey Heistand, Manheim, Pa., and Pamela Lehman, Manheim, April 25, by George Hurst.

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Deaths

Bachman, Leland Alvin, 90, Denver, died May 23. Survivors: son, David; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren.

Beachy, Benjamin J., 101, Bad Axe, Mich., died May 13. Survivors: children Margaret Pamer, Vernon, Eldon, Roy, Doris Albrecht, Ruth Delp, Judy Martin, Sharyl Kurtz; 31 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Burial: May 16 at Pigeon, Mich., by Thomas Beachy.

Birky, Anneliese Dyck, 66, Harrisonville, Mo., died May 1 from complications of a stroke. Survivor: husband, Howard. Memorial service May 6 at Harrisonville by William Lusk.

Blosser, Russell, 95, Wakarusa, Ind., died May 20. Survivors: children Harriet Bontrager, Virgil, Raymond; 10 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: May 25 at Elkhart, Ind., by David Heusinkveld.

Hoover, Lena Weaver, 75, Lititz, Pa., died May 9 of a stroke. Survivors: husband, Lester; children Ruth Seitz, Esther Bucher, Sharon, Jay; six grandchildren. Burial: May 13 at Leola, Pa., by Tom Horst, George Hurst and Nelson Martin.

Hostetler, Neil, 34, Bellefontaine, Ohio, died May 27 in a farm accident. Survivors: wife, Sandra; children Cortney, Jerrod; parents, Kenneth and Jeanette Hostetler. Burial: June 1 at West Liberty, Ohio, by Alvin Yoder.

Hruska, Helen Fathauer, 87, Bedford Heights, Ohio, died May 9. Burial: May 12 at Bedford, Ohio, by David Orr.

Janssen, Fallace L., 71, Roanoke, Ill., died May 22. Survivors: wife, Leona; children Gail, Barbara Hilton, Susan Surratt, Tammy Waterworth; nine grandchildren. Burial: May 26 at Metamora, Ill., by Michael Danner and Jack Stalter.

Krady, Elva Miller, 78, Lititz, Pa., died May 20 of a heart attack. Burial: May 26 at Elizabethtown, Pa., by Don Good and Frank Peachey.

Louis, Manette, 51, Manheim, Pa., died May 22. Survivors: children Maria Zimmerman, Ruth Francois; one grandchild. Cremated.

Maust, Marie P. Swartzendruber, 75, Pigeon, Mich., died May 16 of Alzheimer's disease and a stroke. Survivors: husband Elmer Maust; children Wendell, Margie, Marvin, Faye Hurrer; 10 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Burial: May 18 at Pigeon, Mich., by Thomas Beachy and Luke Yoder.

Ramer, Ethel Rachel Martin, 85, Duchess, Alta., died May 21. Survivors: children Virginia Brubaker, Robert, Charles, Joanne Siemens, Doreen Ropp, William, Beth Friesen; 19 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Burial: May 28 at Duchess by Paul Voegtlin.

Reimer, Willard John, 68, Whitewater, Kan., died May 22 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Gladys; children Rosemary Goertzen, Karen, Kristina Balzer; three grandchildren. Burial: May 26 at Whitewater by Jim Voth.

Shutt, Freeda McCarthy, 74, Port Allegany, Pa., died May 4 of heart problems. Survivor: son, Frank. Burial: May 6 at Whitesville, N.Y., by Gene Vangorder.

Stoltzfus, Edna Pearl Eigsti, 98, Manson, Iowa, died May 21. Survivors: children John, Joseph, Carolyn; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: May 28 at Manson by Curt Kuhns.

Yoder, Enos, 78, Middlebury, Ind., died May 7. Survivors: children Marcia Kindy, Michael; seven grandchildren. Burial: May 11 at Middlebury by Linford Martin and Jeff Kauffman.

Yoder, Esther Hooley, 77, Topeka, Ind., died May 26 of injuries in a car accident. Survivors: Linda Freed, Craig, Donna Stutzman, Mable Classen; 15 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: May 30 at Shipshewana, Ind., by John Murray.

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Classifieds

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks a ***news writer*** and assistant for special events, beginning Aug. 15. Requirements: two years of training and experience in news and feature writing. Some Internet experience preferred.

Call Allen Brubaker, 717-898-2251; or email allenb@emm.org.

Penn-York Camp in north central Pennsylvania seeks applicants for two positions: ***Camp manager***—responsible for office, personnel, finances, programming and facility management. Salaried, career opportunity. ***Maintenance***—housing and benefits provided for semi-retired person/couple.

Send resume or application request to Gene Miller, Penn-York Camp, 266 Northern Potter Road, Ulysses, PA 16948.

Freeman Academy: *$3,000 first-year signing bonus!* Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a ***science teacher.*** Teaching responsibilities include physical science, general biology, general chemistry, A.P. biology, A.P. chemistry and A.P. physics. Salary range $22,750 to $32,850. Master's degree and experience preferred.

Send resume to Freeman Academy, attn. Dr. Larry Horner, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029. Closes July 14, 1998.

Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries has a full-time opening for its ***conventions coordinator,*** whose primary duties relate to the biennial Mennonite Youth Convention. The successful applicant will have experience in youth ministry, congregational leadership, financial management and administration of personnel. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact Everett Thomas at MBCM, P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245; 219-294-7523; email: MBCM@mcimail.com.

Hesston College seeks applicants for the position of ***director of alumni programs and special events.*** Responsibilities: plan and manage alumni events and HC special events weekends and coordinate alumni executive committee and advisory council meetings. Qualifications: people skills, professionalism, creativity, administrative and organizational skills, and commitment to Hesston College and the Mennonite Church. Hesston College graduate preferred, all qualified candidates encouraged to apply. Ten-month annual contract with full-time benefits.

To apply, send resume and references to Elam Peachey, director of development, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information, call 316-327-8111, fax 316-327-8300; email: elamp@hesston.edu. Deadline June 30.

Bluffton College seeks applicants for two tenure-track positions in ***health, physical education and recreation*** with coaching responsibilities, beginning fall 1998. MA required; Ph.D. preferred. Successful candidates must be prepared to teach some but not all of the following courses: physical education methods, kinesiology, recreation leadership, aquatics, fit for life, sport and society, measurement/evaluation of HPER, team and individual sports, and exercise physiology. Coaching duties include organizing and administering all phases of an NCAA Division III women's volleyball or softball program. For additional information: http://www.bluffton.edu/acadaffairs/facvac.

Bluffton College, a growing, Mennonite-related college, welcomes applications from qualified individuals who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Send letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three letters of reference and official transcripts to Joetta H. Schlabach, special assistant to the dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until an appointment is made. Applications for an interim appointment will be considered. EOE

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***graphics designer/image coordinator.*** Begins September 1. Responsibilities include conceptualize and design print, display and Internet communications. Requirements: two years training in graphic design, DTP experience, team player.

Contact Allen Brubaker, 717-898-2251, or allenb@emm.org.

Space available to congregations, conferences, churchwide boards and agencies for classified ads. Call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

by Rich Preheim

Overpaid pastors not an oxymoron

Here are a few things to think about the next time the offering plate passes your way: In a recent survey by *Your Church* magazine, nearly two-thirds of pastors polled feel they are fairly paid. And more than half describe their financial status as secure.

Sixty-five percent of pastors say their pay is fair—and 3 percent even feel themselves overpaid. Twenty-eight percent say they are underpaid, and another four percent feel severely underpaid. At the same time, the survey reports, pastors aren't sure what they should be paid. Twenty-three percent say their salary should be the same as the average salary of their church members, while 22 percent say it should be the same as an area teacher with a master's degree.

But no matter what they get or think they should get, the survey shows that only 35 percent of pastors have ever asked for a raise, even though 90 percent think doing so would be appropriate. Of those who do ask, 87 percent get raises. While most pastors have difficulty asking for a raise, 39 percent of congregations have no policy regarding raises in salary.

Your Church also noted that three of four pastors' families give 10 percent or more to the church, but 35 percent of pastors don't preach on tithing.

United Methodists bullish on missions

And speaking of reaping financial rewards, the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries is committing nearly $25 million for new mission work, thanks to the recent stock market boom.

A concept paper approved by the board earlier this year notes that unprecedented gains in stock prices "have resulted in extraordinary increases" in board reserves, reports *The United Methodist Review.* Among the approved uses for the windfall are $4 million to deploy 800 "young adult missioners," $1 million for 100 new workers in Africa and $930,000 for the board's World Wide Web page and on-line magazine. Other possible initiatives include inner-city development, agricultural development and pensions.

The costs of success

When Orie Wenger started hosting a weekly Bible study in his Greenville County, S.C., home, he didn't think he would have to fight city hall, er, the county zoning commission. It is now a fight which has gone all the way to the state capitol, according to *American Family Association Journal.*

Wenger, an associate pastor in a local congregation, says his Bible studies draw six to 15 people a week. But neighbors complained that the number of cars were a problem. The zoning commission agreed, saying the Bible studies turned Wenger's home into a church. Wenger was ordered to stop the sessions or face fines of up to $1,000.

The state legislature has since passed a measure prohibiting local governments from interfering with religious meetings in homes. But the Greenville County zoning commission has refused to back down, and Wenger has threatened a lawsuit.

This is my bean, broken for you

It happens every Sunday in countless congregations of countless denominations: Believers and seekers alike gather in houses of worship to refresh their minds, spirits and bodies, to drink from the cup, to share in the fellowship of the body of Christ.

It's called coffee time or some similar name, and D.G. Hart wonders if it has been elevated to sacrament in Presbyterian and Reformed circles. (His wonderment could no doubt be extended to other denominations.)

"While it is rare to find a Calvinistic congregation in the U.S. that administers the Lord's Supper each week," Hart writes in *Perspectives,* a journal published by Reformed Church Press, "it is difficult to find a Presbyterian or Reformed church that doesn't have a coffee hour after the morning service. It appears that without the fellowship and communion offered around the Lord's table, the coffee urn has filled the void."

When Lee Krahenbuhl, an ordained Church of the Brethren minister, took a position teaching theater and communications at Calvin College several years ago, he was asked not only to violate his Anabaptist beliefs but also to recant of them.

All tenure-track faculty at the Christian Reformed Church college in Grand Rapids, Mich., are to pledge adherence to the "Forms of Subscription," which is made up of three historic Reformed confessions.

According to the Church of the Brethren's *Messenger,* Krahenbuhl told the administration that Church of the Brethren members don't take oaths. Then he said he was doubly opposed to signing when he discovered in the "Forms of Subscription" that the church "deplores the heinous error of the detestable Anabaptists."

Krahenbuhl did not sign the "Forms of Subscription" and kept his job. He still teaches part-time at Calvin.

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Gordon Houser

Myths to live by

We all live by myths, whether or not we call them that. Our deep-seated beliefs, our thoughts, our actions all flow from an often subconscious loyalty to stories.

"Myth," which comes from the Greek word for story, is often used to mean an untruth, as in, "It's a myth that all Mennonites wear black and ride in buggies."

A better definition comes from *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (1997): "Narrations through which (amongst much else) religious affirmations and beliefs are expressed."

Thus we should ask ourselves, Which stories (narrations) guide us? What affirmations and beliefs do those stories express?

Most of us would claim that it is biblical stories that guide us, and the beliefs we affirm are those of our Christian faith. But let's examine ourselves. Is this true?

In "The Mythical Society" (page 12), J. Denny Weaver looks at myths that shape how U.S. citizens perceive their country. He points out myths that see America as being "a predestined, elect people with a unique, God-given destiny," that see success as a sign of God's favor and that "the nation stands on the verge of a new era of unprecedented opportunity, goodness and prosperity."

We are told by the myths around us to take what we deserve, to look out for ourselves, to assert ourselves at the expense of others. But Jesus invites us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him.

It is naive to pass off these myths and declare ourselves free of their power. Our schools, our economic system, our courts and the media surround us with stories that reinforce such myths. Although we claim to be citizens of another kingdom, as Walter Friesen notes in "Transform Independence Day" (page 10), we live in the midst of myths that vie for our loyalty to a kingdom of this world.

Jesus said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not from this world" (John 18:36). Then he said how it was different: "If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over."

In his book *Engaging the Powers*, Walter Wink discusses this term "world" ("kosmos" in the Greek). While the word encompasses several meanings, Wink suggests that "the New Testament sense of the world as an alienating and alienated ethos may be translated more meaningfully as 'system.' "

What we may glibly call "the world"—as in, "This world is not my home" —is really a complex, intricate, all-encompassing system that exerts tremendous influence on each of us. It is too large and powerful for us to oppose on our own. This is why the greatest weapon against the influence of this alienating system is prayer (see Ephesians 6:10-18).

By going to the cross, Jesus exposed the system ruled by Satan and overcame it. Rather than depend on military might or try to rule by domination, he gave himself "unto death."

That story is the main myth we are to live by, the one we re-enact when we celebrate Communion. We are tempted each day to live by what Wink calls the "domination system," but Jesus invites us to live by a different story. We are told by the myths around us to take what we deserve, to look out for ourselves, to assert ourselves at the expense of others. But Jesus invites us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him (Mark 8:34).

Such behavior does not often fit with "the American way." In fact, we will be seen as traitors. Remember the bumper sticker that read, "America: Love it or leave it"? How about "America: In it but not of it"?

Is everything about America evil? Certainly not. Much is good and deserves praise. But we must remind ourselves of the myths we are to live by—servanthood, truthfulness, forgiveness, peace—as exemplified in the story of Jesus, to whom we offer our ultimate loyalty.

In order not to be "conformed to this world [system]," we must be "transformed by the renewing of [our] minds" so that we may "discern what is the will of God" (Romans 12:2). This requires that we fill our minds each day with the myths, the stories, of God's work in our world, that we teach these to our children and that we pray. Most of all, that we pray.—*gh*

the Mennonite
July 7, 1998

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grace
a gift and a calling

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

The pink raincoat

How wonderful to read of the transforming, transplanting grace of our God ("The Pink Raincoat," June 2). My concern for my "people of the deep roots" is that we do not root in the shallow reservoir of legalistic fundamentalism driven by fears for survival but that our tap root will go deep into the aquifer of grace, mercy and love. As we feed from the heart of God, we will become strong and resilient, knowing who we are, reaching out and welcoming the hurting and disenfranchised as Jesus did.

Let us constantly seek ways to be drawn together around the worship of our God of love and life rather than engaging in creating vehicles of separation from those whom we may differ with on matters of practice or polity. —*LeRoy J. Yoder, Hartville, Ohio*

I have two questions about a quote from "The Pink Raincoat": "Since those days, a greater God has made herself known to me, and she has more of a sense of humor than the U.S. Army does—and more compassion." First, where do the "she" and "herself" come from? Does the author, Lauren McKinney, have an outside source? Second, does *The Mennonite* actually read, select and/or edit its material? —*Mike Hokkanen, Dushore, Pa.*

Standards of membership

Naturally we all very heartily rejoice in the outcome of a story like that of Glen Guyton ("Make Room for the Spirit," May 19), who changed from military service to conscientious objection even though his congregation did not make being a CO a standard for membership.

We would rejoice also at the arrival of a long-separated friend, even if the friend were unfamiliar with our town and had reached our house by traveling the wrong way on a one-way street. We might even decide that God apparently had led the person to our house, despite the traffic violation. But should we therefore begin to ignore the traffic signs or teach that they are optional (at least for new drivers)? I doubt it.

Far sounder than anecdotal evidence for our guidance and practice is the kind of biblical approach that Tim Schrag, Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and David Brubaker used in the April 28 issue as they took up questions of church standards and what we require of members. They did not offer simple answers, and I am not sure they really found New Testament guidance on their central question. But they certainly did show that it is thoroughly biblical to give substance to our teaching by having consistent standards for our members.

One point in the Glen Guyton story seemed clear but never acknowledged. It is that he was challenged to see the peace stance as inherent in the gospel because the larger Mennonite church was sure of its convictions on the point. Yet if our congregations fill with members who are unsure, then of course the Mennonite church as a whole will be unsure. In fact, we can name quite a few Mennonite fellowships in which that has happened.

Let us rejoice in every happy story, but let us keep on looking to the New Testament for our standards of membership.—*Theron F. Schlabach, Goshen, Ind.*

High school pacifism

After reading about the high school basketball team dressed in fatigues with guns ("No Minor Thing," May 19), note that some high schoolers are on a different page: Each year the Bluffton (Ohio) High School marching band participates in a Memorial Day parade. Five members of the band who attend First Mennonite Church in Bluffton decided that participation in the parade violated their pacifist beliefs and requested that they be excused. Their requests were granted.—*Gayle Trollinger, Bluffton, Ohio*

Agriculture and consumerism

Marvin D. Kauffman's letter (Readers Say, May 26) raises a complex issue that clearly has not received adequate theological reflection in the Mennonite church. It dawned on me that my own relationship with agriculture had been (and admittedly continues to be) essentially that of a passive consumer, primarily concerned with food quality, safety and how much I have to pay at the grocery store.

Although there were clearly farmers in our church who seemed most concerned about the bottom line, my conversations with others suggested feelings of powerlessness and fear. They knew that consumers demanded cheap food. The margin between cost of production and the price they were paid for their product was always being squeezed.

My observations suggest that these farmers had become dependent on a large-scale, industrialized mode of agriculture, even as they were forced to watch the impact it was having on their communities. Larger and larger farms.

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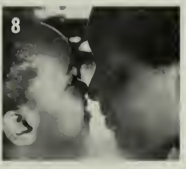
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s say readers say

Fewer and fewer families farming the land. Communities shrinking. Services fleeing. Churches and schools closing. I am not inclined to justify any farmer (including a Mennonite farmer) whose fears lead them to deny justice to their employees or whose agricultural techniques show contempt for environmental sustainability. But if there are "crimes" being committed, we must face our complicity in them as passive food consumers. It's time to empower our farmers and put agriculture back on our faith agenda.—*Gary F. Daught, Tucson, Ariz.*

Speaking the truth, challenging the church

Richard Lewontin writes that "the present movements of religious forces to intervene in issues of sex, family structure, reproductive behavior and abortion are of a different character" (Editorial, May 19). Where is he looking?

Women and children are miserable objects of sex in the United States today. Destroying the family structure brings untold misery to individuals and to our society. Reproductive behavior is often deviant and totally selfish and lustful, not as God intended it to be, bringing addictive misery. As for abortion, who can be more miserable than the aborted fetus?

I agree that we should speak the truth in love, according to the Bible. But we must speak it and challenge when the church's actions are different than before.—*Leon R. Graf, Wadsworth, Ohio*

For saints old and young

Thanks for Omar Eby's "A Song of Old Saints" (June 9). I was encouraged by the range of assertive actions he describes in this modern psalm. Some of these "ministries" might well be undertaken by younger saints.—*Nate Showalter, Taipei, Taiwan*

Cover photo
by Marilyn Nolt

Membership and country committees named to tackle pressing integration concerns

Amid strongly held and differing opinions over how congregational membership should be determined for the new, integrated church, a seven-member committee has been named to step into the fray and develop guidelines.

There have been calls for current General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) congregations to meet unspecified criteria to become members of the new Mennonite Church. But others have assumed that all congregations will be grandfathered in. The point of contention has been around congregations that accept noncelibate homosexuals as members. While that will be a tangential issue, the Membership Committee will not directly tackle homosexuality, says Helmut Harder, general secretary for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) and the committee's staff member.

"We're going to assume everyone is in the [new] Mennonite Church," he says. "We're not going to start by saying nobody is in."

The committee will have to determine how the three GC congregations expelled by MC area conferences over homosexuality will fit into the new denomination. But that, Harder says, is part of a larger issue of what determines membership. That is something on which the two merging churches have differing positions. Will the new church be a denomination of conferences or of congregations?

In the Mennonite Church, congregations hold denominational membership by being members of an MC area conference. But on the GC side, congregations can be members at any but not necessarily all of several levels: area/provincial conference, CMC for Canadian congregations and the international General Conference Mennonite Church.

The Membership Committee was formed by the joint executive committee of the GC and MC general boards. The two boards at their joint meeting in March passed a recommendation to form the committee. The committee's first meeting date has not yet been set.

The Membership Committee is one of three committees starting work this summer on pressing integration matters. Also named are U.S. and Canada country committees to develop the church bodies in each country under the one-denomination, two-country structure approved by the general boards in March. The country committees' primary task is to draw up proposals for composition of each country's general board and delegate assembly.

The Canada committee has a head start because of the existence of the CMC, which is already a countrywide body in some aspects. But there is no parallel U.S. structure, which means the U.S. committee will have to begin from scratch. "It's not just a matter of revising something, it's a matter of starting something," says GC general secretary Jim Schrag.

The Canada committee was scheduled to hold its first meeting July 7, while the U.S. committee will first meet Aug. 22-23. There are no plans for the two committees to meet together, although Schrag says that will probably occur at some point later in the process. The Integration Committee is responsible for developing connections between the two country bodies.

The Membership Committee and the two country committees are to bring reports to the general boards in November. Their work needs to be finished by the boards' April meeting so that recommendations can be presented to delegates at next summer's joint convention in St. Louis.—*Rich Preheim*

Membership Committee

John Esau, director of ministerial leadership for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC); Leslie Francisco III, Mennonite Church (MC) General Board member; Miriam Martin, MC General Board member; Laban Peachey, Virginia Conference moderator; Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, GC General Board member; David Schroeder, retired theology professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg; James Waltner, Indiana-Michigan Conference incoming moderator

U.S. Country Committee

Malinda Berry, MC General Board member; Donella Clemens, MC General Board and Integration Committee member; Del Glick (chair), MC moderator-elect; James Harder, GC General Board member; Ervin Stutzman, MC General Board member; Ruth Suter, Integration Committee member; Marvin Zehr, conference minister for Western District Conference

Canada Country Committee

Chris Arney, conference minister for Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia; Florence Driedger, GC General Board member; Florence Duley, MC General Board member; Pam Peters-Pries, Conference of Mennonites in Canada General Board member; Ron Sawatsky, Conference of Mennonites in Canada chair; Bernie Wiebe, GC assistant moderator; Glenn Zehr, MC General Board member

Youth magazine receives award

With, the youth magazine published by Faith & Life Press, has received an Award of Excellence from the Evangelical Press Association (EPA).

According to the EPA, "Designed with a radical look, this publication takes traditional gospel values and packages them in such a way that teens will read."

With is co-edited by Carol Duerksen and Eddy Hall. It is designed by Jim Friesen and printed at Mennonite Press, Newton, Kan.—*GCMC News Service*

Dealing with difficult decisions

Pacific Northwest effort leads to calls on homosexuality

ABERDEEN, Idaho—Pacific Northwest Conference has initiated a process to address difficult issues. And that has produced calls for the conference to deal with one of the most difficult issues of all—homosexuality.

The conference's annual meeting, held June 18-21, included a discussion session on possible ways for Pacific Northwest to deal with "difficult decisions." The discussion was led by Floyd Lapp and Paul Versluis, members of the Reconciliation Resource Team, a new conference initiative which trains leaders to assist congregations in decision making and conflict resolution.

"The [Pacific Northwest] board's desire is to have a process or format in place before difficult decisions arise," conference moderator Cleon Claassen wrote to all delegates prior to the annual meeting.

Beginning with six to seven minutes of silent reflection and prayer, delegates pondered goals for the process, beginning with three suggestions: to provide opportunities for all congregations to explain their views on an issue; to develop a process that is acceptable to as many congregations as possible; to discuss a given topic tolerantly and flexibly in the spirit of Christian fellowship.

Participants wrote down their ideas, and time was given for some volunteers to share them aloud before the notes were collected. The conference board will continue to work on the process next year.

Following the "difficult decisions" discussion, Lapp and Versluis also moderated an open mike session designed to emphasize listening. "This is not an opportunity for debate between two groups," nor a decision-making time, Claassen said. "It's a time to be heard."

Delegates had earlier signed up to speak during the open-mike session. After each person spoke, Versluis and Lapp asked for points of clarification and summarized each speaker's concern, making sure that he had been accurately heard. Responses from the delegate floor were not permitted. Seven men spoke, including two on the issue of homosexuality, even though no conference congregation has publicly supported noncelibate homosexuals.

"I will not be a party to the endorsing of perversion," said Monty Ledford, pastor of First Mennonite Church of Aberdeen, Idaho. He said some church leaders and congregations "endorse the homosexual lifestyle, using terms like 'covenanted, monogamous relationships.' ... I do not consider them to be true Christian pastors and congregations."

All other issues should be put on the back burner until this one is dealt with, Ledford said, "because for me this is a watershed." The conference should "ask those that don't hold to [the position that homosexuality is sin] to admit they're not part of the same body of believers."

John Slivkoff, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Dallas, Ore., supported Ledford's position. "We should hold people accountable to adhere to the confession of faith," he said.

Pastors who support homosexual relationships of any sort should resign, he said. If they refuse, their ministerial credentials should be withdrawn.—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

Illinois churches link workers, jobs

The people of Chicago's south-side Englewood area needed jobs. They could be found at a factory in the northwest suburb of Hanover Park. The problem was getting from home to the workplace.

But Mennonite congregations in the metropolitan Chicago communities of Evanston and Schaumburg and in Bloomington-Normal, Ill., joined Englewood Mennonite Church to purchase a van to provide transportation. Seven Englewood residents pay to ride the van five days a week to the School Health Supplies plant in Hanover Park. The van started running in late May. —*Missionary Guide*

MCC photo by Pearl Sensenig

Raising to the occasion

Amish Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers from Lancaster (Pa.) County raise a barn June 10 on Katie and Sam Byler's farm near Salisbury in western Pennsylvania's Casselman Valley. The original barn was destroyed June 2 after being struck by two tornadoes within an hour and a half. MDS is working at more than 20 sites in the valley.

Israeli government freezes MCC funds in dispute over agency's tax-exempt status

AKRON, Pa.—When Patty Shelly, Mennonite Central Committee country representative in Jerusalem, received the notice from the Israeli Department of Taxation, she didn't think much of it: MCC has a tax exemption, so just send the notice back as has been done every year since 1980.

But a month later, on May 22, Shelly got a call from the bank. The Israeli government had frozen $155,000 in MCC funds, claiming the organization owes several years of back taxes.

Despite an agreement with the Israeli government, the Department of Taxation is asking MCC to pay for as many as 10 years of back employment taxes. MCC claims it is exempt from the tax, citing a 1978 agreement with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Department of Taxation.

Now MCC and other relief agencies working in Jerusalem are asking Israeli courts to honor those agreements. The organizations fear the threat to tax-exempt status is part of a strategy to force them out of East Jerusalem.

MCC has gone to court to petition the Israeli government to halt the collection. MCC has already been successful in its request to have the amount frozen cut in half and is still seeking a total reprieve.

In MCC's corner is the U.S. State Department, the Canadian government and the Israeli Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Federation and Swedish Organization for Individual Relief also work with Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Like MCC, they have similar agreements with Israel concerning taxation.

"These three organizations are extremely nervous and know as MCC goes, so go they," says J. Daryl Byler, director of the MCC U.S. Washington Office and an attorney who has gone to Israel as an MCC representative in the dispute. "And they are much larger, so their back taxes are in the millions of dollars. They are very anxious to have this situation resolved."

MCC and its fellow relief organizations fear the drive to collect the back taxes may be more than an overzealous bureaucrat, Byler says. "There was a strong consensus among the relief organizations and the Canadian and American embassies that this may be part of a strategy to push the four organizations out of East Jerusalem," he says.

Israel in recent weeks has stepped up its efforts to settle East Jerusalem, destroying dozens of homes to make way for an ever-expanding Jewish presence in the city's Arab quarters.

"It seems there is an unspoken policy to move Palestinians out of East Jerusalem in order to affect the final status issues around the city and who gets what," Byler says. "Clearly that doesn't seem to be the consensus of the Israeli ministries supporting us, but it's uncertain whether the taxation official pressing us to pay supports this policy and is trying to implement it.

"In meetings with taxation officials, they have made numerous hints that these organizations would be better off working solely in the West Bank and not in East Jerusalem."

Byler says one tax official has claimed the 1978 agreement between MCC, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Department of Taxation had been signed at an invalid meeting. But the head of the Department of Taxation in 1978 had been a co-signer of the document.

The case may reach Israel's courts as late as fall, at which time MCC will ask for its tax exemption to be upheld—*John M. Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

> There was a strong consensus ... that this may be part of a strategy to push the four organizations out of East Jerusalem.
>
> —*J. Daryl Byler*

Deaconess' death ends era

NEWTON, Kan.—Esther E. Schmidt, the last surviving deaconess of Bethel Deaconess Hospital and Bethel Home for the Aged, died June 18 at the age of 83 at a Newton retirement community.

Schmidt, a native of Goessel, Kan., became a deaconess in 1953 after working at Newton's Bethel Deaconess Hospital for four years. She retired in 1979. The first of 49 Bethel deaconesses were ordained in 1908, when the hospital was established. Schmidt was one of the last two women to become a deaconess.

Her funeral was June 23 at First Mennonite Church in Newton.

There were several different Mennonite deaconess ministries across North America, starting just before the turn of the century. Most were associated with health-care institutions. Mennonite deaconesses could also be found in Germany, the Netherlands and Russia.

Becoming a deaconess was one of the earliest ways for Mennonite women to hold positions in the church. They wore special garb and did not marry as long as they were deaconesses. Some did resign, leaving for marriage or other opportunities. But others remained lifelong deaconesses.

The dignity of doing theology

Fourth women's conference connects Scripture, life

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—While some women have rejected the Bible because it is patriarchal, according to Wilma Bailey, many oppressed women—in Africa, for example—have found hope and dignity in its message.

The Bible assumes humans must be conscious of their dignity in order to act morally, said Bailey, one of three presenters at the fourth biennial Women Doing Theology Conference June 25-27 on the Bethel College campus.

"To have dignity is to be honorable, even without being honored by others," said Bailey, a religion professor at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

The conference, which drew 84 registrants from seven states, three provinces and India, was sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Women's Concerns program. The theme was "Journey Toward Healing."

"What do we mean by doing theology?" asked author Katie Funk Wiebe, who moderated the conference's plenary sessions.

The answers reflected the emphases on the Bible and women's experiences which permeated the conference. Presenter Lois Barrett, Commission on Home Ministries executive secretary, called doing theology "a process of connecting the biblical record with our current context."

Another presenter, Elizabeth Soto, said, "We need to read our own lives in conjunction with the biblical narrative."

Soto, a former Mennonite Central Committee and Commission on Overseas Mission worker now living in Lancaster, Pa., has worked with AIDS patients in Latin America. There she saw women suffer not only from the physical disease but from social isolation and condemnation. "A theology of health must emphasize the totality of the person rather than focusing on the sickness or disease," Soto said.

This emphasis on wholeness became evident throughout the conference as women shared not only ideas but stories of their experiences and used worship, prayer, singing and art to incorporate concerns for healing. Small groups allowed more intimate sharing of concerns, which included the wounds of being treated as "nonpersons," objectified in the media and advertising as bodies to look at, labeled "angry feminists" when expressing their pain, and suffering abuse and neglect from their spouses and from people in the church.

Many conference participants also talked about their experiences of healing and the support they receive from other women. Margarete Martens from Winnipeg said being at the conference was wonderful, "like being on a different planet." Carol Rose from Wichita, Kan., appreciated meeting friends she hadn't seen in a while as well as making new friends. Vilma Cueva from Miami, shared her "burden for our Hispanic sisters" and invited others to visit her congregation. Iris de Leon Hartshorn from Lancaster called on the white women present to learn from the theology of Hispanic, African-American and Asian women. Brenda Martin Hurst from Bridgewater, Va., recommended the next conference be hosted by women of color.

Several participants raised a concern about a man reporting on this conference. Is this one more example of women's experience being interpreted by men? asked one woman.

Other conference activities included workshops, worship and an evening coffeehouse with music and poetry.—*Gordon Houser for Meetinghouse*

Melanie Zuercher

Cynthia Neufeld Smith, associate pastor of Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan., leads singing during the fourth biennial Women Doing Theology Conference June 25-27 in North Newton, Kan. The conference theme was "Journey Toward Healing."

European school changes name, adds seminary program

LIESTAL, Switzerland—The European Mennonite Bible School, supported by French, Swiss and German Mennonite groups, has changed its name and made changes to its program.

The school's new name will be Training and Conference Center Bienenberg. The school has commonly been known as Bienenberg because after its founding in Basel, Switzerland, in 1951, it relocated in 1957 to the huge Bienenberg building in Liestal. The school was born out of North American Mennonite post-World War II relief and reconstruction work.

While the denominational affiliation has been dropped from the name, printed matter will carry the identifying phrase "An enterprise of the Anabaptist and Free Churches of Europe."

The school will launch a seminary this fall to prepare people for full-time work in congregations, missions and peace initiatives. Seminary study will add two years to the current three-year basic program.

Other changes include the addition of a four-week intensive Bible school and a new discipleship school.

grace

so freely received yet so little practiced

by Phil Callaway

For a Canadian kid, Atlanta is hot in July. Like opening the oven door and poking your head in to see if the bread is done. As my plane touches down, I pack up Philip Yancey's recent book, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (Zondervan, 1997), and step into the Georgia night. A taxi driver talks of weather and baseball's Braves, but my mind is haunted by a question Yancey raised: "If grace is so amazing, why don't Christians show more of it?"

What pulled me along was my search for grace. I rejected the church for a time because I found so little grace there. I returned because I found grace nowhere else.*—Philip Yancey*

In many ways, Yancey's spiritual journey parallels my own. Raised in a "Southern fundamentalist" home in Atlanta, he was exposed early to a message of ungrace. Like Shabat elevators in Israel that stop at every floor so Orthodox Jews can avoid pushing buttons on the Sabbath, the Christianity he learned was much ado about externals, about the buttons to push—or avoid pushing.

"I grew up with the strong impression that a person became spiritual by attending to gray-area rules," he writes, "that you gain the church's and, presumably, God's approval by following the prescribed pattern. ... As a child, I put on my best behavior for Sunday mornings, dressing up for God and for the Christians around me. It never occurred to me that church was a place to be honest." I can relate. Today, several close friends have excluded God from their lives partly because of God's children. Sometimes, my heart aches that they would understand grace as I am beginning to.

It is midnight when I arrive at my hotel, looking for a cool room before a busy schedule at the annual Christian Bookseller's Association convention. A smiling woman informs me that my "guaranteed room reservation" is no longer guaranteed. It seems some guests have stayed longer than expected. "We're sending you to another hotel," she apologizes, handing me $15 for the taxi. My response is anything but graceful.

The bill comes to $10, and I pocket what's left, small consolation for the fact that I'm now in a less-lighted area of town. I keep the curtains shut tight against beggars and bums, push my luggage against the door and open Yancey's book again. "As I look back on my own pilgrimage," he writes, "marked by wanderings, detours and dead ends, I see now that what pulled me along was my search for grace. I rejected the church for a time because I found so little grace there. I returned because I found grace nowhere else."

The next day, I meet Yancey to talk about his new book. It has touched me deeply and I tell him so. "Thank you," he says. "You don't think it will get me in too much trouble?" I tell him it probably will and ask why one of Christianity's brightest pens chose to write on the topic of grace.

"Grace comes free of charge to people who don't deserve it," he responds thoughtfully. "I am one of those people. I think back to who I was—resentful, wound tight with anger, a link in a long chain of ungrace learned from family and church. Now I am trying in my own small way to pipe the tune of grace. I know that any forgiveness or goodness I have ever felt comes solely from the grace of God. I long for the church to become a culture of grace."

An ungraceful church: Yet grace, he believes, hardly characterizes today's church. To illustrate, he tells of a friend who asked a Chicago prostitute if she had ever thought of going to a church for help. "Church?" she cried. "Why would I ever go there?"

"What struck me about my friend's story," Yancey says, "is that women like this prostitute fled toward Jesus, not away from him. The down-and-out no longer feels welcome among his followers.

"A graceful church has room for people who don't know how they feel about it. They're not defining the church or leading the church, but they're not excluded. A graceful church knows how to welcome failure and rewards vulnerability so that a person auto-

Marilyn Nolt

matically thinks of the church when needing help."

While researching the book, Yancey began asking non-Christians what comes to mind when they hear the words "evangelical Christian." Mostly he heard political descriptions—of pro-life activists or gay-rights opponents. "Not once," he says, "have I heard a description of grace. I know many gracious Christians but, too often, the world doesn't see us that way. But shouldn't a church exist for those who need its help, not those who, by their own profession, are so good already that it is they who help the church?"

"Aren't you being a little hard on us?" I ask.

Body shape: He smiles. "I'm picking on Christians because I am one. I see no reason to pretend we are better than we are. But we don't have a corner on ungrace. Our culture is all about appearance. Body shape. Money. Walk into a drugstore and look at the magazine rack and you see our values. Only 1 percent of women would look good in those bathing suits. That's a form of ungrace—you get what you deserve. There's no free lunch. The gospel says there's not only a free lunch, it's a banquet!"

Yancey's previous book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, has sold more than 100,000 copies and was voted the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association's 1996 Book of the Year, yet he seems more impressed with the lessons he learned writing it. "I found out that Jesus preferred to be around sinners. I think it's because they were deeply aware of their need for God. The Pharisees spent their whole lives trying to prove they didn't need [God]," he says.

In *What's So Amazing About Grace* Yancey tells the story of Mel White, one of his best friends, who made the startling admission that he was gay. White, a ghostwriter for Billy Graham, Francis Schaeffer and Jerry Falwell, had a loving and devoted wife and two children, taught at Fuller Seminary and served as a pastor. "I thought, Mel gay? Is the Pope Muslim?" Yancey says. "We had agonizing discussions during which our friendship hung by a thread because he wanted so much for me to approve. I couldn't approve. But most of what Mel hears from Christians is judgment—the vilest things you can imagine. My study of Jesus' life convinces me that whatever barriers we must overcome in treating 'different' people cannot compare to what a holy God overcame when he descended to join us on planet Earth."

'Grace abuse': While the book centers on amazing grace, Yancey also talks about "grace abuse." "We are to try to fathom, not exploit, God's grace," he writes. "But I worry that Christians used to be like perfume atomizers, and now we're like the spray apparatus used by insect exterminators. There's a spot of evil! Pump, spray, pump, spray. But how will we feel if historians look back on the evangelical church of the 1990s and write, 'They fought bravely on the moral fronts but did little to fulfil the Great Commission'?"

Calling himself a "recovering legalist," Yancey believes legalism in North America is changing its focus. "In a thoroughly secular culture, the church is more likely to show

> **By instinct, I still feel I must do something in order to be accepted. Grace sounds a startling note of contradiction, of liberation. The notion of God's love coming to us free of charge, no strings attached, seems to go against every instinct of humanity. The Buddhist eight-fold path, the Hindu doctrine of karma, the Jewish covenant, the Muslim code of law—each of these offers a way to earn approval. Only Christianity dares to make God's love unconditional. I had the clear impression growing up that the more flaws I had the farther I was from God. What I've found in grace is the opposite. Our defects are the very cracks through which grace can pass. If we're so concerned about blocking up all those little flaws, we may find there's no place for grace to get in. I haven't met anyone who can even meet the first commandment.**
> ***—Philip Yancey***

ungrace in its sense of moral superiority or in its fierce attitude toward opponents in the 'culture war.' The fact is, true saints never lose sight of their own sinfulness."

On the way back to my hotel, his final words play through my mind. "God is in the business of dispensing gifts, not wages. None of us gets paid according to merit, for none of us comes close to satisfying God's requirements for a perfect life. If paid on the basis of fairness, we would all end up in hell. … I deserved punishment and got forgiveness. I deserved wrath and got love. I deserved debtor's prison and got instead a clean credit history. I deserved stern lectures and crawl-on-your-knees repentance; I got a banquet … spread for me."

Back at my hotel, I finish the last chapter of *What's So Amazing About Grace?* and close the book, thankful afresh for God's grace and challenged to live a life reflecting it. Minutes later, I walk past a homeless man who sits, calling for my attention: "Hey man, why you walk on by? Why you treat me like garbage?"

I stop. Perhaps unwisely. "I'm sorry," I say. "I didn't mean to." He holds out a free pass to The Gentleman's Club, a nude show down the street. I show him my wedding ring. "I'm a Christian," I say, "and it's tough enough on business trips without you tempting me, man."

We laugh together. He can't stop apologizing. "I'm a Christian, too," he says, tossing his cigarette. "I don't need this." For the next half-hour, I listen to his story. Drugs. Alcohol. Depression. Attempted suicide. Loss of job. "Last night, I slept behind that tree," he points, his breath causing me to inch away. "A rat bit me in the knuckle … right here."

Not knowing what to believe, I ask him, "So what would Jesus say to you?"

"Oh man … he'd say that he loves me. It's the only thing that's got me through."

I pull the $5 from my pocket. "I don't know how you'll spend this," I say, "but that's not up to me." After teaching me a series of handshakes, he listens as I urge him to try to get his job back. Then we part ways. Two sinners. Saved by amazing grace. His words still echo in my ears: "It's the only thing that's got me through."

Phil Callaway is editor of Servant *magazine and author of* Honey, I Dunked the Kids *and* Daddy, I Blew up the Shed *and* The Total Christian Guy. *Reprinted with permission from* Servant *magazine. This article appeared in the April issue of* Presbyterian Record.

PHILIP YANCEY
WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE?
AUTHOR OF THE JESUS I NEVER KNEW

God is in the business of dispensing gifts, not wages.

—Philip Yancey

Beginnings
a tM serie

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by Dorothy Jean Weaver

In the preface to his Gospel (Luke 1:1-4), Luke recounts, step by step, the origins of the story he is about to narrate to Theophilus, his reader.

The Gospels were not written in a day. Nor are they the result of disciples who sat down, quill in hand, to write the personal memoirs of their life with Jesus of Nazareth. The evidence that Luke puts in front of Theophilus is much more complex and much more compelling. Here Luke identifies no less than five stages through which the Jesus traditions passed before they reached Theophilus in the form of Luke's Gospel.

Events that have been fulfilled among us: It all starts with Jesus' first disciples, those Jewish folks who have acknowledged Jesus as Messiah. Events have happened. Things have taken place in their midst. Jesus of Nazareth has lived in one of their towns, walked their roads, taught and healed their masses and died on a cross outside their holy city. In these events, Luke proclaims, Jewish Scripture has been fulfilled. According to Luke and the rest of the early church, the Jewish prophets have pointed toward Jesus' earthly sojourn (Luke 24:27, 44).

This means, in turn, that it is in the events of Jesus' life, detail by detail, that the Jewish prophecies find their ultimate fulfilment: Jesus' birth and childhood, his move to Capernaum, his healing ministry, his use of parables, the lack of faith in Jesus and hatred by the world, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, Judas' betrayal of Jesus, Jesus' arrest, the death of Judas, the condemnation of Jesus by the people and leaders of Jerusalem, the soldiers' lottery for Jesus' clothes, the soldiers' treatment of Jesus on the cross, Jesus' suffering, his resurrection glory.

Eyewitnesses and servants of the Word: But none of this means anything if there are not people who have witnessed these events and recognized their significance. For Luke, this is where the "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" come in. In his two-volume account of the life of Jesus and the origins of the early church (Luke-Acts), Luke highlights the importance of those who "from the beginning" have been witnesses to the Jesus event. These are the folks who have been with Jesus from the outset, the days of John's baptism (Acts 1:22; 13:24-25). They have walked the roads of

A Lukan perspective on Gospel origins

simplestory

Galilee with Jesus, that "prophet powerful in deed and word" (Luke 24:19), as he goes "in and out among [the Jewish people]" (Acts 1:21). They have watched in awe as Jesus "[goes] about doing good and healing all who [are] oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38) and carries out "deeds of power, wonders and signs" (Acts 2:22).

These folks have followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and looked on in horror as Jesus is "rejected" (Acts 3:13, 14), "handed over" (Luke 24:20; Acts 2:23; 3:13), "condemned" (Luke 24:20; Acts 13:27) and "crucified" (Luke 24:20; Acts 2:23) or hung "on a tree" (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29). They are present when Jesus is "killed" (Acts 2:23; 3:15; 5:30; 13:28; cf. Acts 10:39), and they are on the scene when Jesus is "taken down from the tree and laid in a tomb" (Acts 13:29). But most crucially, these folks have discovered the empty tomb (Luke 24:1-3, 12, 22, 24), heard an amazing word from angels at the site (Luke 24: 4-7, 23) and met the Risen Jesus in person (Luke 24:13-35; 36-49). These extraordinary encounters have brought people to the unshakable conviction that "God has raised up Jesus from the dead" (cf. Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33). Nor is this all. Through the agency of God Jesus has also been "taken up" from the earth (Acts 1:22) and"exalted at the right hand of God" (Acts 2:33; 5:31). It is of all these things that the early believers are "witnesses" (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8, 22, 32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31; 22:15, 20; 26:16). And it is all this which they proclaim as "ministers of the word"(Luke 1:2).

Just as they were handed on to us: Now begins the process of "handing on" ("paradidomi") this "tradition" ("paradosis"). This is neither a new concept nor a new task within the Jewish community. From the very beginning there has been a process for "handing on" what is important to the life of the people. Moses, for his part, has "passed on" his "customs," the books of the law, to the people of Israel (Acts 6:14). The Jews of first-century Palestine attached great significance to "the tradition of the elders" (Mark 7:3, 5; Matthew 15:2; cf. Mark 7:8, 9, 13; Matthew 15:3, 6) or "the traditions of ancestors" (Galatians 1:14), a body of oral rulings by which the Jewish scribes interpret the written law. Jesus labels these teachings "human tradition" (Mark 7:8; cf. Colossians 2:8), in sharp distinction from the "commandment" or "word" of God (Mark 7:8, 9, 13; Matthew 15:3, 6) and from what "Moses said" (Mark 7:10) or "God commanded" (Matthew 15:4). And Paul, in pointed contrast to the Jewish leaders, declares to the Corinthians that he is "passing on" (1 Corinthians 11:2, 23; 15:3) to them what he has "received" directly from "the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:23; cf. 15:3). The early Christians are exhorted to "contend for the faith that has been passed on to the saints" (Jude 3) and to "hold fast to the traditions that [they] were taught … by word of mouth or by … letter" (2 Thessalonians 2:15; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:2). Elsewhere they are censured for turning "back from the holy commandment that was passed on to them" (2 Peter 2:21). The "ministers of the word" to whom Luke refers are fulfilling their task.

To compile a narrative: Now narratives begin to appear. Luke tells us many people have set about to compile these narratives (Luke 1:1). What are these narratives? Luke does not specify. Perhaps Mark and Matthew are among them. Perhaps Luke is also pointing to other narratives we do not have in our New Testament canon.

Two things are clear. First, these "narratives" ("diegeseis") serve to "narrate" ("diegeomai") the events of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and exaltation (Mark 5:16; 9:9; Luke 8:39; 9:10; Acts 8:33; 9:27; 12:17; cf. Hebrews 11:32). Second, these narratives differ from each other in significant ways: length, style, organization and content. A simple comparison of any two Gospels confirms this. While they each tell the story of Jesus (and use many of the same traditions to do so), they are also distinctive narratives, each with its own message about Jesus of Nazareth.

An orderly account: Luke is not satisfied with previous attempts. His will be the "orderly account," he explains to Theophilus, "so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed" (Luke 1:3-4). If Theophilus is to understand the story of Jesus adequately, he needs Luke's "ordered" Gospel, in distinction to that of Mark, Matthew or any other Gospel.

There we have it, Luke's account of Gospel origins. It is neither simple nor simplistic. But it is Good News, the best. Let us give thanks.

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.—*Luke 1:1-4*

Luke highlights the importance of those who "from the beginning" have been "witnesses" to the Jesus event.

Dorothy Jean Weaver teaches New Testament at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Events

Festival 98 world missions festival, July 10-12, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions. Contact: 717-898-2251 or www.emm.org.

Festival of Culture, July 11, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions. Contact: 717-898-2251 or www.emm. org.

Mediation and Facilitation Training Institute, July 13-17, Akron, Pa. Sponsored by Mennonite Conciliation Service. Contact: 717-859-3889 or MCS@mccus.org.

Workers

Eash, Ted, concluded a pastorate May 25 at Forks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

French, Ray, has joined the pastoral team at Hesston (Kan.) Inter-Mennonite Fellowship.

Helmuth, David, retired May 31 from a pastorate at East Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Livermore, J.D. Jr., was installed June 14 as pastor of Germfask (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Brad C., ended a pastorate April 1 at Central Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Musser, Eric, was installed June 14 as minister of evangelism and young adults at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Nelson, James H., was installed May 17 as pastor at Grace Chapel, Saginaw, Mich.

Troyer, Marty, was installed June 14 as associate pastor at Lebanon (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Wilson, Scot, was licensed May 17 as pastor at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon, Mich.

Births

Benner, Sarah Elizabeth, May 7, to Gary and Karyn (Landis) Benner, Harleysville, Pa.

Bugaj, Jared Evin, May 22, to Amy (Miller) and Greg Bugaj, Wooster, Ohio.

Crane, Rachel Kathryn, March 5, to Gina (Imhoff) and Scott Crane, Portland, Ore.

Esch, Kristina René, May 18, to Dwaine and Tanya (Ramsey) Esch, Thompsontown, Pa.

Ewing, Benjamin Elliott, May 2, to Gene and Rhonda Ewing, Perkasie, Pa.

Fertich, Evan Sean, March 18, received for adoption by Nance (Light) and Scot Fertich, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Good, Robert James, May 22, to Annetta (Borntrager) and Tom Good, Goshen, Ind.

Hartzler, Holly Marie, April 21, to Diana (Gregg) and John Hartzler, Garden City, Mo.

Kauffman, Kathryn Jae, May 10, to Jan (Helmuth) and Jeff Kauffman, Middlebury, Ind.

Keim, Ian Paul, April 22, to Julie (King) and Paul Keim, Goshen, Ind.

King, Mariana Christine, May 21, to Cindy (Bauman) and John King, Sellersville, Pa.

Miller, Bryce Ray, May 30, to Angela (Mast) and Joel Miller, Bristol, Ind.

Miller, Hunter Cole, May 25, to Douglas and Larene (Hess) Miller, Lititz, Pa.

Mowchan, Gabrielle Susann, May 21, to John and Rebecca (Greenleaf) Mowchan, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Redhead, Elizabeth Diana, April 28, to Gary and Mary Ann (Harris) Redhead, East Peoria, Ill.

Reep, Jenna Diane, March 29, to Cody and Jenise (Voth) Reep, Goessel, Kan.

Santiago, Talia Maylie, May 29, to Juanita (Rolon) and Noel Santiago, Perkasie, Pa.

Schoenhals, Anna Marie, May 26, to Joy and Walter Schoenhals, Archbold, Ohio.

Stichter, Jordanne Renee, June 4, to Becky (Yoder) and Frank Stichter, Goshen, Ind.

Stoltzfus, Michael James, March 31, to Nicole (Smith) and Ryan Stoltzfus, Martinsburg, Pa.

Torres, Miranda, May 14, to Javier and Norma Torres, Waco, Texas.

Wedel, Landon Jay, March 31, to Jay and Sharon (Ross) Wedel, Hesston, Kan.

Wenger, Katelyn Elizabeth, May 18, to Gordon and Sheri (Wenger) Wenger, Lancaster, Pa.

Correction: Amani Debra Amstutz was incorrectly listed as Amari in the June 9 issue of *The Mennonite*.

Marriages

Beck/Yordy: Laura Beck, Archbold, Ohio, and Michael Yordy, Goshen, Ind., May 30, by Dee Swartz and Ellis Croyle.

Bender/Bender: Jacquelin Bender, Tavistock, Ont., and Timothy Bender, Tavistock, May 23, by Darrel Toews and Delmer Epp.

Bontrager/Weaver: Sue Bontrager, Bristol, Ind., and Douglas Weaver, Bristol, June 6, by Terry Diener and Robert Shreiner.

Ediger/Strawn: Kevin Ediger, Windom, Kan., and Rachel Strawn, Hutchinson, Kan., June 6, by Dean Linsenmeyer.

Friedrich/Witmer: Donna Friedrich, Lititz, Pa., and Jeffrey Witmer, Lititz, May 30, by Urbane Peachey.

Goering/Schmidt: Heather Goering, Inman, Kan., and Darren Schmidt, Moundridge, Kan., May 30, by Gary Janzen.

Hershberger/White: Leola Hershberger, Kalona, Iowa, and Clayton White, Kalona, June 6, by Noah Helmuth and David Boshart.

Hershey/Tyson: Brent Hershey, York, Pa., and Luanne Tyson, York, May 16, by Warren Tyson and David Stoltzfus.

Koehn/Rempel: Ryan Koehn, Enid, Okla., and Rachel Rempel, Kalona, Iowa, June 6, by Jay Miiller and Michael Loss.

Miller/Underwood: Todd Miller, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and Teresa Underwood, Elkhart, Ind., May 9.

Stoltzfus/Zimmerman: Michael Stoltzfus, Harrisonburg, Va., and Jennifer Zimmerman, Ephrata, Pa., May 16, by Loren Horst.

Deaths

Bast, Rita Janelle, 77, Kitchener, Ont., died May 24. Survivors: children Norman, Robert, Frank; 14 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: May 28 at Kitchener by Rudy Baergen.

Gascho, Marie, 86, Pigeon, Mich., died May 28 of cancer. Burial: May 31 at Pigeon by Thomas Beachy and Luke Yoder.

Reeser, Anna, 92, Royersford, Pa., died May 26. Burial: June 1 at Gap, Pa., by Garland Meyers and Ralph Malin.

Reimer, Norma Tieszen, 75, North Newton, Kan., died May 26 of complications from heart failure. Survivors: husband, Hugo; children Roberta Schmidt, Raymond; five grandchildren. Burial: May 29 at Inman, Kan., by Steve Yoder.

Ratzlaff, Leon, 78, Henderson, Neb., died May 20. Survivors: wife, Jeanne; children Terry, Bryan, Candice Friesen; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: May 26 at Henderson by Stuart Pederson and John Yoder-Schrock.

Reinford, James, 43, McAlisterville, Pa., died May 31 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Lynette; children Heidi, Malynda, Quentin, Spencer; parents, Nelson and Mary Reinford. Burial: June 6 at Evandale, Pa., by Glen Peachey and Sam Scaggs.

Showalter, Dale, 58, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, died May 31 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Kathleen; children Delwyn, Kendall, Malcolm, Jerilyn Winga; four grandchildren; parents, Harry and Lala Bender Showalter. Burial: June 3 at Mount Pleasant by Marc Hershberger.

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Waynesboro Mennonite Church seeks ***minister of youth and Christian education.*** For more information contact Stan Kauffman, Rt. 6 Box 56K, Waynesboro, VA 22980; 540-943-1324; email sdkauffman@juno.com.

Pennsylvania Mennonite Federal Credit Union: ***Member service representative.*** Full-time with computer skills and people skills. Please call the Pennsylvania Mennonite Federal Credit Union at 717-291-1364.

Amigo Centre is offering ***family camp*** Aug. 2-5, 1998, with intergenerational worship and wondering led by Rachel Miller Jacobs. Come experience God's presence! For information call 616-651-2811.

Bethel Mennonite Church, rural Inman, Kan., seeks a ***pastor.*** Average Sunday attendance is about 240. Candidates should submit resume, letter of interest or inquiries to Chris Weaver, search committee chair, 348 Arrowhead Road, Inman, KS 67546; 316-585-6907.

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., seeks ***minister of youth and young adults.*** Candidates should submit their resume or letter of interest to A. Jerome Yoder, chair, search committee, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center needs full-time ***assistant for coordinating communications*** and seminar logistics, with the potential for assisting in educational outreach, conciliation services, etc.

Call LMPC at 630-627-0507 for a full job description and application information.

Penn View Christian School is accepting applications for the 1998-99 school year for the following positions: ***middle school English/literature teacher*** and part-time ***instrumental teacher.***

Send resume to Rosemary Lambright, middle school principal, Penn View Christian School, 420 Cowpath Road, Souderton, PA 18964; 215-723-1196.

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Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks a ***news writer*** and assistant for special events, beginning Aug. 15. Requirements: two years of training and experience in news and feature writing. Some Internet experience preferred.

Call Allen Brubaker, 717-898-2251; or email allenb@emm.org.

Menno House, a hospitality ministry of Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, seeks individual or married couple for 25 hour/week ***manager*** position for guest/resident house in New York City. Begin August 1998. Low rent and salary. Live in Christian community. Meet guests from around the world.

Inquiries: Menno House, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003.

Service Adventure, an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2-month service-learning program for ***young adults ages 17-20,*** still has openings this fall in the United States and Canada. Wonderful experience for young adults wanting to grow personally and in faith through service, church and living in Christian community facilitated by an adult leader.

Information: Diana Cook, Mennonite Board of Missions, 219-294-7523; email SA@MBM.org

Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries has a full-time opening for its ***conventions coordinator,*** whose primary duties relate to the biennial Mennonite Youth Convention. The successful applicant will have experience in youth ministry, congregational leadership, financial management and administration of personnel. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact Everett Thomas at MBCM, P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245; 219-294-7523; email: MBCM@mcimail.com.

Bridge of Hope, Coatesville, Pa., a ministry to homeless families, is seeking a full-time ***assistant to the executive director.*** Position includes office management, as well as computer, bookkeeping, fund-raising, marketing and programmatic support. Qualified candidates should have experience or a degree.

Call Edith Yoder, executive director, for more information, at 610-380-1360.

Lititz Area Mennonite School has the following positions open for the 1998-99 school year: ***K-8 physical education teacher***; this person will also assume the role of athletic director. ***Grade 6-8 science, 8th grade pre-algebra.*** With an enrollment of 212, we are located in a semi-rural section of Lancaster County.

Contact Lititz Area Mennonite School, 1050 E. Newport Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-626-9551; fax 717-626-0430.

Hesston College needs an ***admissions counselor*** for Kansas recruiting. Qualifications include good communication and organizational skills, commitment to Mennonite higher education, and familiarity with the Mennonite church. The counselor will develop and implement a territorial recruitment plan, build relationships with top prospects and applicants, telemarket, travel and represent Hesston College at churches and high schools. Bachelor's degree preferred. Position available immediately.

Send resume and references to Clark Roth, director of admissions, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information, email clarkr@hesston.edu or call 1-800-995-2757. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Classified advertising space is available in *The Mennonite* to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, with a minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

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Send resume to VMRC Center, 1501 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802.

Freeman Academy *$3,000 first-year signing bonus!* Freeman Academy is accepting applications for a ***science teacher.*** Teaching responsibilities include physical science, general biology, general chemistry, A.P. biology, A.P. chemistry and A.P. physics. Salary range $22,750 to $32,850. Master's degree and experience preferred.

Send resume to Freeman Academy, attn. Dr. Larry Horner, P.O. Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57029. Closes July 14, 1998.

Iowa Peace Network, a peace and justice organization affiliated with the Brethren, Mennonite, Quaker and United Methodist churches, is seeking a full-time ***coordinator.*** Responsibilities include: publishing *Dovetail* newsletter, programming, networking and administration/fund-raising. Salary range (based on experience): $14,000-15,000 per year, plus a modest stipend. EOE.

Direct inquiries to Search Committee, Russ Leckband, 1916 Bear Creek Rd., Earlham, IA 50072. Deadline: Aug. 31, 1998, or until position is filled.

Eastern Mennonite University seeks the following:

Senior graphic designer: 12 months, full-time. Bachelor's degree in art/related field and 3 years experience required. Create printed material for more complex projects. Application deadline: July 20, 1998.

WEMC station manager: 12 months, full-time. Bachelor's degree and two years experience required. Direct operations of FM station and station fund-raising. Application deadline: July 15, 1998.

Multiethnic people encouraged. Contact EMU Human Resources Office, 540-432-4108; email ebyby@emu.edu.

Landis Homes has the following openings:

Adult day services manager for dementia care: A new full-time position for a facility opening late this summer to serve people with dementia. Desire LPN or BSW with two years' experience with older adults in a supervisory capacity and experience or interest in people with memory impairment.

Adult day services manager to work with functionally impaired. A full-time position requiring a licensed nurse. Prefer two years' experience working with functionally impaired individuals and supervisory experience.

Special care activity coordinator: A new full-time position for a facility opening late this summer to serve people with dementia. Responsible to coordinate and plan activity program for dementia and adult day program. Requires a bachelor's degree or two years' experience in the human services field along with skills and interest in working with people with memory loss.

Contact Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; or call 717-581-3936.

Mennonite Board of Missions seeks candidates for **Great Lakes Discipleship Center director.** Available immediately. In partnership with MBM and the GLDC board, this person will give leadership to the opening of a new (Radical) Discipleship Center in Fort Wayne, Ind., by planning and coordinating discipleship training, giving staff leadership and oversight, and administering the GLDC Reaching and Discipling Program (RAD). Qualifications include passion for mission to the world, commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist beliefs and practice, cross-cultural experience, understanding of North American youth and young adult cultures, and a bachelor's degree with relevant major. Required are strong abilities in communication, organization and budget management, and experience in supervision and team leadership. This person must be an effective leader and positive model of Christian discipleship, able to stimulate teamwork among people from diverse backgrounds.

If interested, please contact Rachel L. Stoltzfus, 219-294-7523; email Rachells@mbm.org, or write: MBM, P.O. Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

Camp Hebron needs a ***director of development.*** Year-round Christian camping and retreat ministry, rooted in the Anabaptist tradition, is seeking an individual to take leadership in fund-raising and development efforts including capital campaigns, planned giving and cultivation of a broader support base. Successful candidate will have a heart for the ministry, advanced interpersonal skills, a bachelor's degree and 3 to 5 years of experience. Salary commensurate with experience.

Contact Lanny Millette at Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., 1-800-864-7747; or email hebron@camphebron.org.

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20Q at The People's Place

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Send letter of application, resume and professional references to Paul A. Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email dean@goshen.edu. We encourage application through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu.

Moving?

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by Gordon Houser

Film is important, said James Wall at the annual meeting of the Council on Church and Media, an association of Mennonite and Brethren communicators, held June 4-6 in Chicago.

Wall, editor of *The Christian Century* since 1972 and active in relating theology to film, told CCM members that we should learn the difference between what John D. McDonald called "schlock" (mediocre) art and very good art, or in this case, film.

Wall pointed out that film is the only art medium to emerge after the Enlightenment and thus was "born in the midst of secularity." While we may think we go to films to be entertained, he said, we are being captured. Thus we need to think about what we are experiencing as we watch a film.

Two questions to ask of a film are these: What is the vision of life this filmmaker wants to share? How effective is it?

Of course, most films are mediocre, and their aim is mainly to make money. The vision of life they present is often shallow, promoting violence, greed, self-gratification.

One of the functions of good art is to hold a mirror to our life to help us see it in a different light. Peter Weir's original new film *The Truman Show* (rated PG) does just that.

Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey) has been on TV 24 hours a day since he was in his mother's womb. Christof (Ed Harris) has created an enclosed world called Seascape Island and a town called Paradise, where Truman grows up surrounded by actors he believes are real. Yet only Truman ("True-man") is real, says Christof.

In the spirit of Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*, this brilliant film shows us a heaven on earth that becomes a nightmare as Truman slowly uncovers the deception.

The mirror Weir holds up reveals our own voyeuristic tendencies. Like the audiences in the film that watch Truman and experience life vicariously through him, we, too, are captured (enraptured?) by the movie we are watching. We, too, turn to TV—whether it's the news, sports, soap operas, sitcoms or dramas—in order to experience life.

While we observe Truman in his falsely idyllic world, we are captivated by an equally false world. Just as Christof manufactures "a better normalcy" than the real world outside, we turn to the tube for a better reality. As we root for Truman to escape his false world, we remain blind to our own imprisonment to the medium we happen to be absorbing.

Newsweek

A better reality: Christof (Harris), right, looks down on the unaware Truman from his television studio above.

The Truman Show captures us with its storytelling, then turns the tables on us and leaves us questioning the reality we take for granted. And we thought it was only a movie.

From our readers:

Ruth Naylor, Bluffton, Ohio, recommends *Sacred Chaos—and the Quest for Spiritual Intimacy* by James R. Newby (Continuum, 1998, $18.95). She writes: "Christian leaders and lay people alike who have experienced the awakening discomfort of restlessness that invites change, the chaos of feeling that life is no longer satisfying or that it has gotten out of control, and those who struggle with the emotional pain of loss will likely hear God's invitation to spiritual growth in this book."

TV

"Landmarks of Faith" is a spiritual travelogue of stories of courage and devotion documenting the hardships and sacrifices made by early members of various congregations. The series of one-hour shows runs on the Odyssey Channel on Wednesdays (10 p.m. EDT), beginning July 1 and ending Aug. 12. The 24-hour channel is available to more than 30 million homes through 1,500 cable systems. Odyssey prohibits on-air solicitation, the attempt to convert viewers to a different faith and the maligning of other faiths.

books

Women writing:

The Quotidian Mysteries by Kathleen Norris (Paulist Press, 1998, $5.95) is her Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality. In this short book (91 pages), Norris—author of *Dakota, The Cloister Walk* and *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith* (just published)—shows how our walk with God can be alive in the "quotidian" or commonplace. She writes, "Laundry, liturgy and women's work all serve to ground us in the world, and they need not grind us down." This gem of a book also includes some of Norris' poems.

Piecework: A Women's Peace Theology is a book of letters, conversations and reflections about the implications of peace from a feminist Mennonite perspective. Written by seven Mennonite women (Eileen Klassen-Hamm, Carol Penner, Rosalee Bender, Wendy Kroeker, Valerie Regehr, Gloria Neufeld Redekop and Kathy Shantz) from across Canada, it is sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Canada's Women's Concerns and Peace and Social Concerns and may be ordered by calling 204-261-6381.

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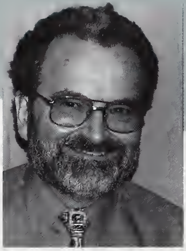

J. Lorne Peachey

There is such a thing as a free lunch!

Forget what you've been told all your life:
That everybody gets what they deserve.
That there's a limit to what can be tolerated.
That there's no such thing as a free lunch.

It's just not so. Because, as Philip Yancey notes in his book *What So Amazing About Grace?*(see page 10), if we're really honest, most of us would have to admit we really don't get what we deserve. Once in a while life hands us a lot worse than we wished. More of the time things are much better than we'd get if life's experiences were handed out on the basis of merit or righteousness.

I came to understand this even more several weeks ago when I participated in a Walk to Emmaus. An international spiritual renewal experience supervised by The Upper Room out of Nashville, Tenn., the Walk is an intense 72 hours of focusing on one's relationship with God, especially God's love and grace.

For me, one of 13 "pilgrims" on the Walk, that love came through most clearly as I came to realize there were literally scores of volunteers working behind the scenes as cooks, pray-ers, and clean-up and set-up groups. I knew none of them beforehand, yet here they were, giving of their time so that I could experience God's love. They were doing it because they had experienced that love and wanted to share it.

This is the message we need to hear today: God loves us. God loves us unconditionally. There is absolutely nothing we can do to merit that love—or to get rid of it.

It worked. I came away from that weekend absolutely certain of God's love for me—forever. Sure, I knew this in my head before I went, but it was during my Walk that God's love became part of my emotions and my psyche—also forever. I came away from the Walk overwhelmed by what it means to be loved by God, completely and unconditionally.

But this is the message of the gospel: God's love, given freely, undeservedly. Paul puts it this way in Romans 5:8—"But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." This is, in other words, a free lunch, something we get just because God wants to give it to us, not because of who we are or anything we have done.

Those are easy words to write but most difficult to grasp. Yancey sums up the difficulty this way: "By instinct I feel I must *do something* to be accepted."

But it's not up to us. "Grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us more," Yancey writes. "And grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us less."

That's a scandalous message, especially for those of us in the church, because it takes away any "doing" to make us God's children. Surely, perhaps, somehow, we have to do something to qualify for this grace, we tell ourselves. If we don't get it right, God may just give up on us.

Faith is to let go of those fears. It is also to let go of our fears that we will take advantage of God's free love and grace, abusing themby not taking sin seriously. More than one rule has been written and one belief codified because we have been afraid of the abuse of grace, i.e., what would happen if the absolute grandeur of God's love and grace, given freely, caught on among us.

Yet this is the message we humans so desperately need to hear: God loves us. God loves us unconditionally. There is absolutely nothing we can do to merit that love—or get rid of it. Our tendency, however, in a day of sin and deviancy, is to want to put criteria around that grace. Before we give this scandalous message of free love, we want to make sure people somehow deserve it—and won't abuse it.

What we forget is that sin and deviancy come when people have lost their moorings, when they see no reason for their existence and have no purpose in their lives. We also forget that when people come to the realization that God does love them, no matter what, that understanding will do more to straighten out their lives and give them meaning than any list of do's and don't's we may agree to subscribe to.

When things are unsettled, both within the church and in the world around us, the message for us all is simple: God loves you. God's grace is for you. All you have to do is accept this love and grace. For the Christian, there is such a thing as a free lunch.—*jlp*

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the Mennonite

July 14, 1998

environmental racism

Mennonite pastor Steve Cheramie calls out for justice for Native people in Louisiana.

4 Taking a stand against assisted suicide
7 MCC U.S. to decentralize programs
15 Forget the ecclesiastical examiners
16 Diversity is a gift from God

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Merger matters

Re: the one-denomination, two-country structure for the integrated Mennonite Church: There is a difference between nostalgic sentimentality and reality. The reality is that there is a border between Canada and the United States, and there are two different histories. Those of us who have worked in the structures of our respective conferences have been confronted by these realities. We have different needs, and simply subduing these needs does not bring about oneness. I wanted that beautiful oneness but had to accept the stark reality that culturally we had two bases. I believe, however, that we can still have this oneness in the new structure. We have to work for it.

It seems I hear too little about the overarching umbrella conference that is to continue to bridge the border. We have the same hymnbooks, Sunday school materials, seminary and confession of faith. Many positive and negative features and issues bind us together. We are all sinners saved by grace, and we will want to continue to support each other.—*Henry J. Gerbrandt, Winnipeg*

I'm surprised that the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church isn't accepted as a merger. Let's not call it "the new church" or "the new denomination." We are not a new denomination, I hope. We merged. That's it.

Sure, the homosexual situation will be worked on, and many other things will be worked on through the years. But we'll work on them within the merged unit, not sorting like at an entrance to the merged body.—*Paul Kauffman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Celebrate commonalities

I find the survey report "What People Said" (June 2) very important and revealing. Among other things, the data show little difference between the views of General Conference Mennonite Church members and Mennonite Church members, a finding that we obtained in the 1989 survey of church members (published as *The Mennonite Mosaic*). Within each group, the responses for particular items range from one extreme to the other. This suggests that both groups are cut from the same cloth, a very comforting thought in respect to the merging of the two groups. In view of our similarities, the very minor differences sink into insignificance. Let us celebrate our commonalities and rejoice that squabbles of the past can be put to rest.—*J. Howard Kauffman, Goshen, Ind.*

Bottom-line standards?

I'm sure I'm among the many who are disappointed that Mennonite Mutual Aid has decided to discontinue providing comprehensive and collision auto insurance later this year. Reasonable auto insurance especially benefits the less wealthy. I notice the tremendous increase in assets MMA has enjoyed over the past several years—from $482 million in 1993 to $949 million in 1997. Why is this the time to discontinue a program that clearly provides mutual aid to those who need it most? I would certainly hope that corporations within the church would make decisions based on a higher standard than the bottom line. May they continue that tradition.—*Tim Schultz, Norma, N.J.*

From mission field to mission field

The June 2 issue reports "Eastern Mennonite Missions Administrator to Make August Return to Mission Field." Grace and I are delighted that you have reported on our decision to transfer from Eastern Mennonite Missions administration to involvement with Lithuania Christian Fund College.

But we do not view our moving to Lithuania as a return to the mission field. Grace and I are in the midst of a very needy mission field in Mountville, Pa., where we now live. In fact, the very week that the story appeared in *The Mennonite*, we had a neighbor couple in for an evening of strawberries and ice cream. We had a very lengthy conversation about faith with these dear friends, who are unchurched.

For us, the move is not a return to the mission field but rather moving from the mission field in Mountville, Pa., to that in Klaipeda, Lithuania.—*David W. Shenk, Eastern Mennonite Missions Overseas Ministries director, Salunga, Pa.*

Talking power

In his article, "Power Looks Different from on Top" (Speaking Out, June 2), George Lehman raises thought-provoking questions regarding how our relative positions of power distort our understanding of situations, be they personal or on a broader level. What is also often misunderstood is the very concept of power itself. Power confuses and even mystifies peo-

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ple. Not only would many rather avoid the subject altogether, but also when in positions of relative power, many deny that they actually have power. Avoiding the discussion of issues related to power, however, means we avoid answering an important question with respect to relationships: How do we really treat each other?

A group of Mennonites in Ontario believed strongly enough in the importance of talking about the subject that in 1997 we took it upon ourselves to organize a consultation on issues of power in the Mennonite church. As one might expect, the dialogue was not without controversy. For many participants, it was the first forum where they could speak frankly on the topic with other Mennonites from across North America. Round two will be held Oct. 15-18.—*Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, Elmira, Ont.*

Tolerance's destruction

The designer and creator of all life describes homosexuality as destructive and sinful. An individual congregation or entire denomination cannot change that no matter how many formal memberships it extends.

Tolerance alone is the lowest form of acceptance that anyone can give another. But those who are asking the church to accept homosexuals as legitimate members are asking for more than tolerance. They are really asking for the church to accept homosexuality as a lifestyle that is wholesome, righteous, pure and holy.

If a church agrees to accept the lifestyle of homosexuality by dressing it up in the clothes of life and righteousness, it will be tolerating the death of those it has been called to shepherd. Tolerance of that which ultimately destroys people is not love. It is gross negligence.—*I. Keith Miller, Chesapeake, Va.*

Cover photo
by Elaine Maust

Doctors, nurses associations take stand against assisted suicide, for better care

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.—Assisted suicide is not appropriate for Christian care givers but improving the care for people facing death is, Mennonite physicians and nurses organizations have agreed. Both the Mennonite Medical Association (MMA) and Mennonite Nurses Association (MNA) passed opinion papers related to end-of-life issues at their joint annual meeting June 25-28.

"We believe legalizing physician-assisted suicide is bad public policy and is a moral error," the doctors' opinion paper states. "To provide legitimate conditions under which one person can take, or assist in taking, the life of another is to cross a boundary we cannot condone."

Although physician-assisted suicide is illegal in all states except Oregon, it is possible that many physicians will be faced with legal requests to provide lethal agents to patients in the future. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June 1997 that while there is no constitutional right to physician assistance in dying, the issue is a legislative one to be decided by individual states.

The doctors' paper, which was approved unanimously, bases its opposition to physician-assisted suicide on God's sovereignty over life and death and the conviction that even dependency and suffering can have meaning. The paper distinguishes between allowing death and causing death and calls for increased funding for hospice and other services for people with terminal illnesses.

"I'm really pleased that we arrived at a collective opinion on this issue," said Jep Hostetler, MMA executive secretary. "We realize we will need to continue wrestling with other ethical issues, many of which we may not be able to agree on."

MNA members came to a similar consensus at their business meeting. While the nurses' statement also voices opposition to assisted suicide, its focus is on the kind of care the association considers appropriate for the dying: "We are committed to provide adequate and creative pain relief, follow the advance directives that may be in place and allow the dying person or representative to determine when food and fluid is no longer desired."

The nurses' statement also pledges spiritual support. "A sense of God's love and presence is never more needed than at the time of death," it concludes. "We desire to embody that kind of love and presence for those we serve and thus help remove the fear of death."

The weekend conference, which drew about 200 people, also included a workshop to discuss end-of-life issues.—*Jennifer Halteman Schrock*

Pittsburgh man runs the good race

Ulli Klemm claims he can't quilt, bake or do woodwork. But he can run.

So Klemm, a member of Pittsburgh Mennonite Church, used his feet instead of his hands to raise funds for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). He garnered more than $3,000 in pledges to run the Pittsburgh Marathon on May 3.

Hampered by the flu, Klemm covered the 26.2 miles in four hours and five minutes. During the race, Klemm had pinned to his shirt and written on his left hand the names of those who had pledged support.

"Until I learn how to quilt, bake or work with wood, I'll continue to raise money for MCC doing what I do best: run," Klemm says. "That's the gift I can offer."

Understanding in their own language

Oldest GC Hispanic group celebrates anniversary

LANSDALE, Pa.—In search of a better job, Lollo Reinoso in 1967 moved from Miami to Lansdale in Pennsylvania Dutch country. What he found there spoke to his heart. In his native language.

Reinoso, his wife and their infant son attended the local Mennonite congregation which sponsored them, even though they couldn't speak any English at the time. A friend encouraged the family to attend the Spanish-language service at Grace Mennonite Church. The Reinosos have actively participated in the congregation ever since.

"I was very, very happy to find a Spanish-speaking church," Reinoso says in perfect English, "because when you first start learning English, it's difficult to understand the word of God. I was glad to have our own service in our own language."

Grace Mennonite Church's Spanish Department, the oldest Hispanic outreach in the General Conference Mennonite Church, celebrated its 40th anniversary June 28. The service, which drew some 250 people, was the first time both Grace's English and Spanish groups have held a Sunday-morning service together. The Spanish Department has about 60 members.

While technically not separate congregations, they function as such. The meet simultaneously on Sunday mornings for worship and

Pacific Southwest adopts polity statement after dropping no-discipline position

GCMC photo by Doreen Martens

Chuwang Pam (right), pastor of Los Angeles Faith Chapel, leads his congregation's praise team in singing at the Pacific Southwest Conference annual assembly June 26-27.

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, Calif.—Pacific Southwest Conference delegates have approved a polity statement for their conference after removing a troubling phrase on not disciplining congregations.

As first introduced at the conference's winter meeting in January, the statement said, "No congregation will be disciplined by the area conference solely on the basis of any perception of noncompliance with denominational statements." But at the annual assembly June 26-27, the phrase was dropped, said conference moderator Duane Oswald, to eliminate concerns that it suggested "anything goes" theologically.

Removing the phrase was one of several revisions made in the statement before delegates approved it at the assembly. An altered sentence says the "worldwide Mennonite church entering the 21st century is a multicultural, multiracial church in a pluralistic setting."

The statement then goes on to say that the "ethnically and theologically diverse conference" values "unity for mission over uniformity of practice" and seeks "to respect, understand and accept one another as members of the body of Christ."

Congregations can expect the conference to facilitate "procedures through which we can dialogue in areas of differing understandings according to the values expressed in the denominational statement 'Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love,' " the polity statement says.

The assembly, held at Iglesia Evangelica Bethel, a Hispanic congregation, showcased the diversity mentioned in the polity statement. Assembly participants learned about a skid-row ministry started by Los Angeles Faith Chapel, a congregation of mostly West Africans. A collection was taken to provide transportation funds for church planters just across the border in Tijuana, Mexico, who receive training and mentoring at the Los Angeles-based Center for Anabaptist Leadership.

The assembly closed with a joyous concert which raised more than $3,000 to benefit persecuted Mennonites in Indonesia. The concert, featuring musicians from Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church, Faith Chapel and JKI Zion, an Indonesian congregation in LaMiranda (Calif.), included Latin Mass music, contemporary gospel, reggae and hymns performed on Indonesian bamboo instruments.—*Doreen Martens for GCMC News Service*

Ecuador native Byron Guzman is pastor of the Spanish Department at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa., which celebrated its 40th anniversary last month. The group has about 60 members.

Sunday school at Grace, one upstairs, the other downstairs. They employ separate pastors and have equal representation on the church council. The two bodies hold some joint events, including Communion, a summer picnic and annual meeting.

"People often ask about the structure of the two departments," says Spanish Department pastor Byron Guzman. "They wonder how we can function without being independent. ... A lot of churches open their doors to a ministry like this, but when it comes to administering it, they don't have the commitment to the mission the way Grace Mennonite does."

The Spanish Department was started in 1958 in response to a growing population of migrant workers from Spanish-speaking countries who came to work on area farms in the summers. Grace members John Fretz, a former missionary to Cuba, and Earl Stover, a former missionary to Puerto Rico, along with Guillermo Chegwin, a Colombian living in Philadelphia, wanted to provide a place for the workers to worship in their own language. The first worship service was held June 29, 1958.

Chegwin was the first pastor, serving for 16 years. He delivered the main message at the anniversary celebration. Other pastors have come from Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Guzman is from Ecuador.
—*Delphine Martin*

The first Hispanic Mennonite congregation was Lawndale Mennonite Church in Chicago, established in 1934 as the result of Mennonite Church initiatives in the city. Today there are 73 congregations in the MC Hispanic Mennonite Convention, and 28 in AMIGA, the General Conference Mennonite Church group. Fourteen congregations are dually affiliated.

Measuring the journey toward healing

Women's conference participants come from near, far

What I learned is I am somebody and I don't always have to feel that somebody else can do it better than I can.

—Nancy Froese

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—At the urging of her sister-in-law, Nancy Froese of Leamington, Ont., attended the fourth Women Doing Theology conference, held June 25-27 on the campus of Bethel College. Her trip to North Newton, however, qualifies for any list of traveler's nightmares. But Froese says the ordeal, coupled with the conference, has made her stronger.

First her travel agent sent Froese—who had only flown twice before and always with someone else—to the Kansas City airport, more than three hours from North Newton, instead of to Wichita, only 45 minutes away. Froese then missed the last flight of the day from Kansas City to Wichita. All the nearby motels were full, so Froese ended up half an hour away from the airport and spent all her American money on the taxi there and back. When she finally reached Wichita, she discovered she had lost her credit card.

That night in Kansas City, alone in a motel in a strange city, Froese was exhausted yet too wound up to sleep. "I lay there thinking, 'Why is this happening to me? I'm going to a conference called "Journey Toward Healing." Is this how we start?' " she says.

Now back home in Ontario (that trip went smoothly), Froese says she came out of the experience a different person.

"I feel I am way more independent," she says. "I would never have thought I could go through something like this. It's made me way stronger emotionally. I'm not as dumb as I thought I was; now I know if I have to do something, I can do it.

"My sister Helen cried when I told her the story and said, 'I could never do that.' I told her, 'Yes, you could, if you had to.'

"We've been brought up to think that we have to depend on a parent or a husband. I've always been too dependent on other people. What I learned is I am somebody and I don't always have to feel that somebody else can do it better than I can."

The conference, sponsored by the Mennonite Central Commitee U.S. Women's Concerns program, drew 84 registrants from seven states, three provinces and India.

Opal Barclay's journey to the conference was much shorter geographically than Froese's. Barclay lives in Halstead, Kan., about 10 miles from North Newton. But she traveled far in other ways.

She and her husband retired to Halstead six years ago after spending the 17 previous years in Denver. Two years ago, however, her husband died.

"I didn't drive at the time," Barclay says, "and for about a year I sat there and felt sorry for myself. Then I went and got the car out of the garage and started learning how to drive."

Neither Barclay nor her husband came from Mennonite background, but she recently began attending Hesston (Kan.) Inter-Mennonite Church, where she saw a bulletin announcement for the Women Doing Theology conference. "I saw the theme, 'Journey Toward Healing,' and I knew there were a lot of areas in my life that need healing," Barclay says.

"I felt like my faith was renewed at the conference," she says. "Before, I had so many fears about doing things, and now I think I've lost some of that fear. I felt so much freer, like I could do anything, when I was there [at the conference]. I saw that my experience is common to a lot of people—it's not just me. The Lord set us free, but a lot of time the churches don't."*—Melanie Zuercher for Meetinghouse*

Getting all dressed up

Jen Reitz gets a little help from a Nepali woman in putting on a traditional sari. Reitz, from Washington Boro, Pa., was a member of Eastern Mennonite Missions' first Youth Evangelism Team to Nepal, which finished its assignment this spring. The group—four North Americans and an Indonesian—spent much of their time in prayer, including prayer walks through villages and to Hindu temple areas. Members also helped build a stone wall and terrace at a Youth With a Mission base and interacted with missionaries.

EMM photo

MCC U.S. regions to assume more responsibility under board-approved decentralization plan

AKRON, Pa.—After years of discussion and planning, the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. board has taken a giant leap toward decentralization, adopting a plan to transfer much of MCC U.S. program from the national level to the agency's four regions.

The regional offices will be adding staff to assume responsibilities in two areas: (1) administration for MCC service and minority internship programs in their regions, currently part of MCC U.S. Community Ministries, which will be eliminated, and (2) more work now being done by MCC U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, which will have its Crime and Justice and Peace Education programs eliminated at the national level.

Much of the transfer is expected to be done gradually during the next two years. Three positions in Community Ministries and five in Peace and Justice Ministries will be cut. MCC U.S. will honor all current contracts of employees in positions to be terminated. Remaining in the national office in Akron, Pa., will be the MCC U.S. executive office and six staff members of Peace and Justice Ministries.

The plan, adopted by the MCC U.S. board at its June 12-13 meeting, does not affect MCC's overseas work.

A major reason for the change was to bring MCC U.S. program closer to the constituency. But staff members have had fears that decentralization would move programs from the national level but not get picked up or be adequately emphasized by the regions. One area of particular concern was the Damascus Road anti-racism project. But Community Ministries director Jeannie Romero Talbert says some of those fears have been allayed because each region will have a Damascus Road-trained team by the end of 1999. "We're feeling fine about it," she says.

But some concerns remain. "There continue to be mixed feelings … because we don't know what all this means for peace and justice work," says Iris DeLeon-Hartshorn, Peace and Justice Ministries director.

The number of Peace and Justice Ministries staff members remaining at the national level has been increased since the original proposal, which called for three or four staff members. Regions will be free to hire staff to work on peace and justice issues as they see fit. For example, MCC Great Lakes co-director Bruce Glick sees his region adding one three-quarter-time person by 2000.

Other changes approved by the MCC U.S. board include streamlining the board from 29 members to between 14 and 17. Each regional board will have two representatives, and the following conferences will each appoint a member: General Conference Mennonite Church-Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ, Evangelical Mennonite Church, Conservative Mennonite Conference and Beachy Amish. As many as three at-large members may also appointed.

At least 25 percent of the board will be people of color, and at least 40 percent will be women.

MCC U.S. will also pursue incorporation as part of the organizational change.—*Rich Preheim with John M. Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. is comprised of five offices in four regions:

- MCC East Coast, located in Akron, Pa., covers Maine to Florida and Alabama.
- MCC Great Lakes, with headquarters in Kidron, Ohio, includes Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee.
- MCC Central States runs the country's midsection from the Canadian to the Mexican border. Headquarters are in North Newton, Kan., with another office in Freeman, S.D.
- West Coast MCC, located in Reedley, Calif., covers the United States west of the Rocky Mountains.

U.S. Ethiopians look to make links with homeland

GOSHEN, Ind.—Since the 1970s, many Ethiopian Mennonites have immigrated to the United States, some as students, many more as political refugees. Now they have been called to share in the work of the church in their home country.

"Instead of saying, 'We are here, they are there,' we need to involve ourselves," said Tesfatsion Dalellew, former executive secretary of the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC), the Mennonite church in Ethiopia, and who has lived in the United States since 1986. "We have several resources: knowledge, time, money, technology. How can we use them?"

Dalellew was the organizer of the first Friends of Meserete Kristos Church conference June 19-20 on the Goshen College campus. About 100 Ethiopians and 15 former Mennonite missionaries gathered to worship and discuss their roles in the Ethiopian church.

Zenebe Abebe, Goshen's dean of multicultural affairs, and Dagne Assafa, pastor of Shalom Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, presented one idea to link friends and former MKC members in the United States with MKC congregations.

The plan, strongly affirmed by conference participants, includes sending Ethiopians in the United States back to Ethiopia as scholars-in-residence, raising funds to help those who want to return to Ethiopia and developing sister church links between North American Ethiopian Mennonite congregations.

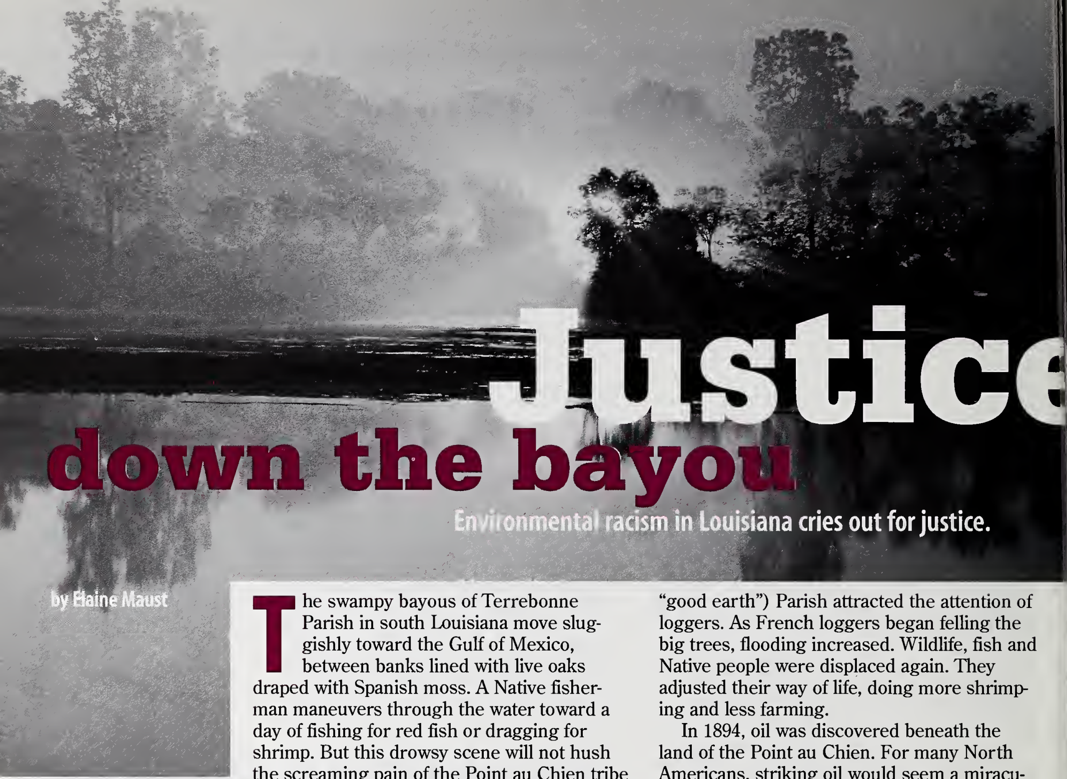
"Our journey has been exciting and frightening," Assafa said, "but now it's time to press onward."—*Rachel Lewis of MBM News Service*

Tesfatsion Dalellew first heard of Mennonite Central Committee as a teenager in Ethiopia when longtime MCC administrator Orie Miller visited the country.

"I was fascinated to see this elderly gentleman from so far away come to address us," Dalellew says. "I thought to myself, 'Who knows, maybe someday I'll work for MCC.'"

Now he does. Dalellew has been named co-director of MCC's Africa programs. He succeeds Jim Shenk, who held that position since 1988.

A former executive secretary of the Ethiopian Mennonite church, called Meserete Kristos, Dalellew had worked for more than 20 years with World Vision, a Christian relief agency. Now affiliated with Seattle Mennonite Church, he also pastored at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Upland, Calif.—*MCC News Service*



Justice down the bayou

Environmental racism in Louisiana cries out for justice.

by Elaine Maust

The swampy bayous of Terrebonne Parish in south Louisiana move sluggishly toward the Gulf of Mexico, between banks lined with live oaks draped with Spanish moss. A Native fisherman maneuvers through the water toward a day of fishing for red fish or dragging for shrimp. But this drowsy scene will not hush the screaming pain of the Point au Chien tribe of Native people. They have been tossed aside to watch the raping of their land.

Long before Louisiana was incorporated as a state, Native people hunted, fished, farmed and lived off this land they considered sacred. "They thought of themselves as protectors, defenders of the land. The land was communally held and well respected," says Steve Cheramie, a Mennonite pastor and church planter. Steve has been tribal chair of the Point au Chien since 1993. Of particular importance were the ceremonial grounds, the burial sites and the shell middens—piles of clam and oyster shells used for burial grounds until the 1950s. Through centuries of environmental racism, however, the land has been scraped away from the Point au Chien.

When DeSoto explored the Mississippi basin, the alligator- and mosquito-infested swamps seemed of little interest to the Europeans. The Native people of the area congregated in these swamps to avoid conflict with European settlers. "The tribe was given a land grant from the Spanish government for as long as they lived on it or until all descendants died," Steve says.

Then the massive oaks that held in place the fragile soil of Terrebonne (French for "good earth") Parish attracted the attention of loggers. As French loggers began felling the big trees, flooding increased. Wildlife, fish and Native people were displaced again. They adjusted their way of life, doing more shrimping and less farming.

In 1894, oil was discovered beneath the land of the Point au Chien. For many North Americans, striking oil would seem a miraculous opportunity, but not for the Point au Chien. Oil companies and developers wanted the land. They, along with the state of Louisiana, discovered creative and deceitful means to remove the tribe.

Native traditions: A Louisiana law stated that if a couple were not married by a church or justice of the peace, their children could not inherit their land. Native people were married by Native traditions. So the state simply sold the land to developers. "Now we have to pay to fish and hunt and trap on land where we've been for maybe 1,000 years or more," Steve says. "And we have to pay people who've only been there maybe 70 years."

Steve describes other scams. The first public school for Native people in Terrebonne Parish did not begin until 1954. Prior to that, Native people, who spoke only French by the 1900s, did not read or write. The concept of one even being able to own land or sell was inconceivable to the Native people. The land was to be shared. Their view of the land combined with their illiteracy made them easy targets. "They put an X on a paper and [developers] had stolen the land," says Steve. "Signs were posted on Indian property that read, 'We claim 600,000 acres of land. Go to the Parish

> Now we have to pay to fish and hunt and trap on land where we've been for maybe 1,000 years. And we have to pay people who've only been there maybe 70 years.
>
> *—Steve Cheramie*

There is an oil well in Grandma Rosalee's front yard. From that well alone since 1921 have come 22 billion barrels of oil, off that one well, and natural gas worth more than that. And we don't get a penny of it and haven't. The non-Indians who laid claim to the land 70 to 80 years ago are filthy rich and make no donations to the Native community.—*Steve Cheramie*

to dispute this claim.' When the Indians asked what the signs said, they were told, 'No smoking.' Many people believe that's why Indians were not allowed to go to school. [White people] didn't want us to be educated so we could legally fight for rights."

The discovery of oil meant not only displacement and loss of rights to their land for the Point au Chien, it meant watching the destruction of land. "Oil companies are rapists of the land," Steve says. "They just drill for oil, strike oil, drain the oil and move on. They sliced through the land to make transportation canals. Chemical spills, accidental and intentional, destroyed the seafood. They were reckless in all that they did."

Filthy rich: "We have been fighting since the 1930s for rights to the land," Steve says. "Just on the property that belongs to my extended family there are 200 oil wells. There is an oil well in Grandma Rosalee's front yard. From that well alone since 1921 have come 22 billion barrels of oil, off that one well, and natural gas worth more than that. And we don't get a penny of it and haven't. The non-Indians who laid claim to the land 70 to 80 years ago are filthy rich and make no donations to the Native community."

Steve and the other Point au Chien dream of the day when the land will be given back to the tribe. "We will try to reclaim and restore and heal the land to make it livable by cleaning the water and stopping erosion," says Steve. "We've had elders we had to bury that have been Christian converts. As they were dying, they said, 'Pray that Jesus will give us our land back.' Many Point au Chien Christians pray for this daily."

It is important to Steve that the Mennonite church hears this story of environmental racism. "Paul says, 'When one member hurts, we all hurt.' In this day when the church is trying to be honest and trying to do justice, they need to know there is a little group of Indians fighting for their land and the only way of life they've ever known. As they are coming to faith they need to know there is a church that prays that justice will be done."

Elaine Maust lives in Meridian, Miss.

Culturally sensitive, biblically sound and Christ-centered

As Steve Cheramie (pictured below) grew up on the island community of Le Skiene (French for "the skins") in south Louisiana, he never heard of Mennonites and little about faith in God. Once a year, at Christmas or Easter, one of his parents took some of the nine children in the family to Catholic Mass. A few times Steve went along.

At age 10, Steve began to study Native spirituality from his aunts and uncles. During this apprenticeship in Native ways, Steve came to know the Lord Jesus when he visited a Christian church for the first time with some friends. "I was 17 when I heard the gospel for the first time and I gave my life to the Lord," says Steve. His first contact with Mennonites came through Mennonite Central Committee volunteers in Houma, La., with whom he worked in community development.

Today Steve is a Mennonite pastor and church planter among the Native people of south Louisiana. Native Christian Fellowship, which began in 1996, is "contextualizing the gospel message to Native people," Steve says. Funerals, child dedications and weddings are key opportunities for cultural sensitivity, but the emphasis is on all of life. Their attempt is to be "culturally sensitive, biblically sound and Christ-centered," according to Steve. "This is more than a cosmetic attempt to be Native and Christian by putting a Native wall hanging in this church. This is about the entire way we live Christian lives."

Native Christian Fellowship is the only Mennonite church that Steve is aware of that offers this type of ministry, a contextualized approach to Christianity.—*Elaine Maust*

Elaine Maust

Urban farming

A Virginia farm girl offers agricultural lessons in a Kansas inner city.

by Wendy Wenger

So how did a Virginia farm girl end up in the capital city of Kansas? This is a frequent question I've entertained while living in the Mennonite Voluntary Service unit in Topeka. My usual answer, simple yet challenging, is, "I want to learn."

Before last fall, I'd never heard of sustainable agriculture and knew next to nothing about what urban farming entailed. Through work with the Kansas Rural Center's Common Ground Project, I am quickly realizing these areas could be the direction of my future. I want to understand how people in the inner city function.

As I learn about urban agriculture, what truly fascinates me are the people: youth who don't understand the concept of planting a seed and producing food; people who assume the grocery store creates a tomato; welfare families who would have to travel across the city to purchase fresh produce because there is no local access. The basic issue becomes: How do we empower the people to provide for themselves?

Stardusters Crime Prevention, Inc., a partner in the Common Ground Project, is doing just this. At its East Topeka Urban Farm on 12th Street, Stardusters trains youth to manage and operate the market gardening business, sales and field work. These youth learn valuable horticultural and business skills, not to mention a work ethic, while staying out of trouble. The community has come together to combat crime, urban blight and deterioration in their neighborhoods. Last summer, gardens sprang up on vacant lots across the area.

To the north, LULAC Senior Citizens Center revamps its greenhouse each year to help supply the area with bedding plants for the growing season. At Southern Hills Mennonite Church, people organize by joining gardeners at the church with individuals and families in the neighborhood who want to learn about gardening.

As I learn about and work toward a sustainable food system in the city, one thing is clear. With learning about people and about poverty and injustices that shove people down comes the ever-increasing responsibility to speak out. Lest we reduce ourselves to silence and join the status quo, we must be a voice for what we know to be true.

Wendy Wenger is a volunteer with Mennonite Voluntary Service. She works with Southern Hills Mennonite Church and the Kansas Rural Center on its Common Ground Project in Topeka, Kan.

> **With learning about people and about poverty and injustices that shove people down comes the ever-increasing responsibility to speak out.**
>
> —*Wendy Wenger*

Mennonite Voluntary Service is looking for people with a background in agriculture to work at urban farm organization, and a person with communications skills to promote efforts of sustainable agriculture. If you are interested in exploring these and other opportunities, contact MVS, 722 Main St., Newton, KS 67114, 316-283-5100, mvs@gcmc.org.

Ballast

by Angela Lehman-Rios

We thought we felt our bodies pushing upward,
balloons held anxious captives under tarps.
To fly, we said, we must discard those things
which weigh us down. Our books and furniture,
our stove and bed: all flung to heedless winds.
To no avail—the sky still flapped above,
a taunting cape. We cast away our pins,
our buttons; we pulled our buildings down,
and in the desperate rubble, tore our shirts,
stretched our pleading arms up to the sky.

And then we saw the truth our bodies knew:
that gravity, our only wealth, holds sway,
our heavy joys and sorrows keep us here,
firm-anchored in this earnest length of days.

Angela Lehman-Rios lives in Richmond, Va.

Illustration by Ingrid Hess

Winnipeg troupe still taking stage

For the past 27 years, the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre has produced up to three plays every year. "Theater and the arts, concerts, dance—they make life worth living," says member Victor Pankratz.

The company was started in 1972 by youth from Winnipeg's First Mennonite Church. The impetus came from "a desire for freedom of choice, love of drama and all that went with it: glamour, the intellectual aspect," says David Riesen, who has been part of the troupe since its second year.

Productions have included drama, opera and musicals. Most have been in German, others in Low German or English translation. The most recent show was *Die Lustige Witwe (The Merry Widow).—Canadian Mennonite*

Mission agency administrators named

Successors have been named to follow the retiring executives of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church mission programs.

Ron Flaming, who was in India with the Commission on Overseas Mission until this month, will become COM's executive secretary on Nov. 1. He had been an administrator at Woodstock International School. Flaming previously served in college and seminary staff positions and several pastorates.

Sheldon Sawatzky, COM East Asia program director, has been serving as interim executive secretary following the May 31 retirement of Glendon Klaassen.

Ronald E. Yoder, a Mennonite Board of Missions administrator since 1983, will become the next vice president of MBM's Global Ministries. He will succeed Alice Roth, who will retire on Aug. 31. Yoder has been MBM vice president of Partnership Services since 1993, overseeing computer, development, finance, human resources and partnership staff.*—GCMC and MBM news services*

EMU president receives fourth term

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Joseph L. Lapp, president of Eastern Mennonite University since 1986, has been named to a fourth four-year term as the school's president. The reappointment by Mennonite Board of Education follows a review by MBE and the EMU board. The new term starts July 1, 1999.

The review committee found overwhelming support for Lapp and affirmed another term for him. The committee's report called Lapp "visionary, creative and innovative."

Central America seminary starts new facilities

GUATEMALA CITY—SEMILLA, the Central American Anabaptist seminary, celebrated the the placing of the first stone for new facilities on May 30. Offices, classrooms and a guesthouse will be built during the next 12 months.

"Now that we have land, we want to build—to build on a solid foundation," said academic dean Mario Higueros. "This foundation is the capacity to listen to and follow Jesus Christ. To place the rock as a foundation is a community act."

SEMILLA, based in Guatemala City, offers classes throughout Central America, mostly to pastors and other leaders in Central American Mennonite churches.

Iraqi leukemia program not jeopardized

AKRON, Pa.—Saddam Hussein's recent announcement that he will refuse further humanitarian aid to Iraq should not affect Mennonite Central Committee's program to supply leukemia medicines for 50 Iraqi children. All the medicines, except for one drug, are already in storage in Iraq. MCC officials anticipate no problems getting the one remaining drug.

But it is unclear how other MCC aid will be affected. Currently 13,920 school kits for Iraq are being held in MCC's Ephrata, Pa., warehouse until more information is available. MCC worker Wanda Kraybill is in Baghdad working on the situation.

Hussein reportedly banned the aid to protest economic sanctions against Iraq. *—MCC News Service*

GCMC photo by Melanie Zuercher

Marriage, mission, merriment

Women from the choir of Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hualien, Taiwan, perform a tribal folk dance as part of a June 20 event celebrating 50 years of Mennonite service in Taiwan and 50 years of marriage by Roland and Sophie Brown, longtime workers in the country. The celebration, held in North Newton, Kan., was also a reunion, drawing 32 people from Taiwan, plus former hospital staff members living in the United States and former Commission on Overseas Mission workers in Taiwan. The Browns, now living in North Newton, were married June 25, 1948, the same year Mennonite Central Committee started medical work in Taiwan. The Browns went to Taiwan with MCC in 1953, then returned with COM in 1957. They retired in 1993.

Events

Western District Conference women's retreat, Sept. 12-13, Camp Mennoscah, Murdock, Kan. Theme: "Women Embracing Families." Contact: Cynthia Rhodes, 316-799-2315.

"The Art of Agreement" workshop on committee process with a Christian perspective, Sept. 13-14, Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich. Leader: Mark Vincent. Contact: The Giving Project, 219-296-6236 or givingproject@Prodigy.net

Workers

Amstutz, Neil, will begin Aug. 18 as pastor of First Mennonite Church, McPherson, Kan.

Dunn, James, will begin Aug. 1 as pastor of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan.

Births

Beck, Caitlin Michelle, June 9, to Joe and Gloria (Short) Beck, Archbold, Ohio.

Cassel, Abbey Elizabeth, March 15, 1998, received for adoption June 16, 1998, by Scott and Sue (Kellogg) Cassel, Auburn, Ind.

Charles, Nora McCarthy, May 26, to Daniel Charles and Brigid McCarthy, Washington, D.C.

Fast-Sittler, Irian Elizabeth Cosette, May 25, to Julene Fast-Sittler and Rick Sittler, Elmira, Ont.

Fatzinger, Ian Joseph, May 19, to Jennifer (Senner) and Tom Fatzinger, Bloomfield, Mont.

Gerber, Emily Michaela, May 4, to Jody and Vickie (Black) Gerber, Kidron, Ohio.

Good, Darren Chad, April 13, to Ray and Sandi (Miller) Good, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hinkle, Edward Warren, June 16, to Donna and James Hinkle, Elkhart, Ind.

Lee, Samantha Rose, June 8, to Jim and Nicole (Plato) Lee, Williamsburg, Va.

Litwiller, Levi Troyer, June 3, to Dan and Susette (Greider) Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

Lowry, Eamon Myles, May 7, to Carol (Kiser) and Craig Lowry, Harrisonburg, Va.

Mack, Sara Catherine, May 29, Barbara (Beyer) and Dean Mack, Telford, Pa.

Mann, Allyson Makenzie, May 17, to Eric and Jan Mann, Fountain Hills, Ariz.

Miller, Amarie Katherine, June 2, to Darrell and Peggy (Spiruta) Miller, Albany, Ore.

Miller, Angela Faith, June 5, to Kelly (Shaffer) and Tim Miller, Manheim, Pa.

Miller, Gabriel Stoltzfus, May 5, to Kevin Miller and Rebecca Stoltzfus, Baltimore.

Moyer, Mackensie Detweiler, June 6, to Geoffrey and Sheryl (Detweiler) Moyer, Telford, Pa.

Nussbaum, Daniel Lee, May 13, to Stacy (Kanagy) and Steve Nussbaum, Dalton, Ohio.

Rhodes, Bailey Eileen and Erin Elizabeth (twins), June 18, to Renee (Emswiler) and Winston Rhodes Jr., Bridgewater, Va.

Schueck, Rebekah Kathryn, June 12, to Barb (Jones) and Mike Schueck, Pottstown, Pa.

Stoltzfus, Joseph Christian Shenk, June 4, to Rose (Shenk) and Reuben Stoltzfus, Charlottesville, Va.

Sweigart, Benjamin Aaron, June 9, to Kenton and Sue (Rohrer) Sweigart, Mount Joy, Pa.

Teichroeb, Garret Joseph, June 1, to Nicki (Kennel) and Tim Teichroeb, Albany, Ore.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
invites applications for
the position of

U.S. Executive Director

Starting date: July 1, 1999
Location: Akron, Pennsylvania
Applications will be accepted
through September 15, 1998

Direct inquiries and applications to:
Rich Garber,
Chair, Search Committee,
17270 Northside Blvd.,
Nampa, ID 83687
Phone: 208-467-3519
Fax: 208-467-2022

Mennonite
Central
Committee

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

Marriages

Beck/Hrynewycz: Jeremi Beck, Elkhart, Ind., and Lisa Hrynewycz, Syracuse, Ind., June 13, by David Heusinkueld.

Brenneman/Brenneman: Cindy Brenneman, Stuarts Draft, Va., and Tom Brenneman, Joetown, Iowa, April 11, by John Lawrence.

Briles/Peters: Lois Briles, Kansas City, Kan., and Michael Peters, Olathe, Kan., May 29, by John Briles.

Clark/Mineart: Kevin Clark, Wayland, Iowa, and Lisa Mineart, Washington, Iowa, June 6, by Steve Good and Paul Conally.

Dickel/Fleming: Melissa Dickel, Kalona, Iowa, and Aaron Fleming, Wellman, Iowa, June 13, by Jay Miiller and Charles Buller.

Driver/Shenk: Steve Driver, Waynesboro, Va., and Tammy Shenk, Newport News, Va., May 23, by Truman Brunk Jr. and Lloyd Weaver Jr.

Eggers/Ott: Tammy Eggers, Atkinson, Neb., and Justin Ott, Atkinson, May 30, by Garold Schwarz.

Geiser/Murr: Brian Geiser, Kidron, Ohio, and Katie Murr, Wooster, Ohio, May 16, by Dan King.

Goehrig/Shank: Michael Goehrig, Lititz, Pa., and Marcella Shank, Manheim, Pa., June 13, by Robert Goehrig.

Goertzen/Peters: Tami Goertzen, Henderson, Neb., and Jeffrey Peters, Henderson, May 30, by Joel Schroeder and Weldon Martens.

Hernandez/Nieto: Jose Angel Hernandez, Chicago, and Mercy Nieto, Chicago, June 6, by Ingrid Schultz.

Hollinger/Kreider: Jonathan Hollinger, Manheim, Pa., and Heidi Kreider, Manheim, June 13, by Elam Hollinger.

Johnson/Nelson: Amy Johnson, Manheim, Pa., and Erik Nelson, Laconia, N.H., May 23, by Dennis Ernest.

Kaufman/Kuhn: Douglas Jay Kaufman, Davidsville, Pa., and Tonya Louise Kuhn, Davidsville, May 30, by Homer Schrock.

Koblick/Showalter: Ronald Koblick, St. Louis, and Darlene Showalter, Stuarts Draft, Va., May 24, by William Evans.

Koehn/Rempel: Ryan Koehn, Enid, Okla., and Rachael Rempel, Kalona, Iowa, June 6, by Jay Miiller.

Liddle/Mann: Jonathan Liddle, Flagstaff, Ariz., and Shari Mann, Flagstaff, May 30, by David Mann.

McCaffery/Swinger: Carrie McCaffery, Lind, Wash., and Dennis Swinger Jr., Lind, June 13, by Don Haase.

Nyce/Refsnider: Christopher Nyce, Telford, Pa., and Diane Refsnider, Perkasie, Pa., June 6, by John Ehst.

Pomante/Puff: Nicholas Pomante, Gilbertsville, Pa., and Heather Puff, Boyertown, Pa., June 6, by Nelson Shenk.

Rodriquez/Stutzman: Melqui Rodriquez, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and Jennifer Stutzman, Kalispell, Mont., June 6, by Dwight Hooley.

Ropp/Schrock: Joseph Ropp, Duchess, Alta., and Ranene Schrock, Exeland, Wis., May 16, by Elwood Schrock.

Schrock/Vander Vliet: Jeffrey Schrock, Elkhart, Ind., and Jennifer Vander Vliet, Elkhart, June 13, by Marvin Grooms.

Deaths

Albright, Victor, 78, Pretty Prairie, Kan., died May 14 of a stroke. Survivors: wife, Esther; children Darrell, Marilyn; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: May 18 at Pretty Prairie by Elmer Wall.

Dillard, John, 75, Wellman, Iowa, died April 16. Survivors: wife, Rose; children Denise, Douglas. Burial: April 19 at Wellman by Herb Yoder and Mike Klassen.

Earnest, Tabor Philip, 3 months, Nampa, Idaho, died June 2. Survivors: parents, Beth and Scott Earnest. Burial: June 5 at Caldwell, Idaho, by Duane Oesch and Robert Miller.

Emswiler, Ray, 95, of Harrisonburg, Va., died May 9 of Alzheimer's disease. Survivors: wife, Emma; children David, Frank, Esther Kraybill, Irene Good; 10 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: May 12 at Broadway, Va., by Michael Shenk.

King, Nellie Zook, 97, of Goshen, Ind., died May 31. Survivors: sons, John, Stanley; four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren. Burial: June 11 at Goshen by Firman Gingerich and Nancy Kauffman.

Franz, Helen Manchester, 67, Lind, Wash., died June 2 of cancer. Survivors: husband, Earl; children Yvonne Redelfs, Gail Hudson, Jeanette Filan; seven grandchildren. Burial: June 6 at Ritzville, Wash., by Lee Lever.

Helmuth, Nellie Wagner, 81, Eureka, Ill., died May 29. Survivors: son, Duane; four grandchildren. Burial: June 2 at Eureka by Rick Troyer.

Hershberger, Albert, 83, Kalona, Iowa, died May 5. Survivors: children Garth, Jerrold. Burial: May 8 at Wellman, Iowa, by Herb Yoder and Marc Hershberger.

Kauffman, David James, 79, Middlebury, Ind., died June 3 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Hope; children Glen, Edward, Kent; five grandchildren. Burial: June 8 at Middlebury by Ken Livengood.

Kempf, Ervin, 84, Kalona, Iowa, died May 16. Survivors: wife, Lucille; children Darrel, Janice, Larion, Ervin, Dennis, Lydia. Burial: May 19 at Wellman, Iowa, by Robert Yoder and Mike Klassen.

Weldy, Clara Wogomon, 77, Wakarusa, Ind., died June 8. Survivors: children Larry, Terry; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: June 11 at Elkhart, Ind., by Peter Buller.

Classifieds

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., seeks ***minister of youth and young adults.*** Candidates should submit their resume or letter of interest to A. Jerome Yoder, chair, search committee, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232.

Bethel Mennonite Church, rural Inman, Kan., seeks a ***pastor.*** Average Sunday attendance is about 240. Candidates should submit resume, letter of interest or inquiries to Chris Weaver, search committee chair, 348 Arrowhead Road, Inman, KS 67546; 316-585-6907.

Kraybill Mennonite Elementary School, Mount Joy, Pa., is accepting applications for part-time teacher in middle school for ***home economics, health classes,*** with option for some counselor responsibilities.

Contact John Weber, administrator, 598 Kraybill Church Rd., Mount Joy, PA 17552; or call 717-653-5236 for more information and an application.

Niagara United Mennonite Church is looking for ***leading pastor,*** to work with ministerial team in a 600-member congregation, commencing 1999 (start date negotiable).

Send resume or call for information: Search Committee, Niagara United Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 1258, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0; 905-468-3313; fax 905-468-4754.

Lititz Area Mennonite School has the following positions open for the 1998-99 school year:

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Contact Lititz Area Mennonite School, 1050 E. Newport Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-626-9551; fax 717-626-0430.

Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church invites applications and resumes for a full-time ***leading minister.*** We are a General Conference congregation of some 500 members, situated 1 1/4 hour south of Winnipeg. Qualifications: Should show strength in team leadership, knowledge in Anabaptist foundations, and familiarity in Old and New Testament studies. This person should possess motivation, vision for both ministerial team and congregation, and skill in communications—speaking, listening and facilitating.

Contact: Search Committee, c/o Peter Hildebrand, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; 204-324-8317; email aaront@mb.sympatico.ca.

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Classified advertising space is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

Forget the ecclesiastical examiners

by Robert Hartzler

Sometimes I think I see the specter of a Board of Ecclesiastical Examiners determining who can and cannot be a part of the new integrated Mennonite Church. No one has asked me to serve on this board, and it's just as well, because I will not do it if asked.

From the beginning of integration discussions, the tacit, if not intentional, assumption has been that the new body will be comprised of the two merging bodies. Now we hear hints of some kind of an examining entity to ensure optimum orthodoxy and maximal like-us-ness in the new Mennonite Church. May I ask who will do this, and what will be the minimal qualifications for membership?

A reminder: Anabaptists have consistently seen the local congregation as the basic unit of the church. Discernment and discipline on matters of membership is a congregational mandate. The local congregation then connects with the larger body of churches for mission. But to make the area conference or denomination a disciplinary body is a slap in the face of Anabaptism. The brotherly agreement at Schleitheim (1527) was only that—a brotherly agreement.

Having had significant experience in both the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church, I observe that the differences on crucial issues of faith are minor. The major differences are on matters of polity. The General Conference has a greater degree of congregational autonomy; the Mennonite Church a greater degree of area conference authority. But it must be said that all Mennonite Church congregations from Amish and Amish-Mennonite backgrounds have in their history a practice of congregational autonomy similar to that of the General Conference congregations of today. The greater degree of authority vested in area conferences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in North America represents a brief deviation from the more normal practice of congregational autonomy in historical Anabaptism.

The greater degree of authority vested in area conferences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in North America represents a brief deviation from the more normal practice of congregational autonomy in historical Anabaptism.

I say, Forget the truth squad, the ecclesiastical examiners, the reviewers of right religion or whatever you call this ghost on the horizon.

All congregations who are participants in the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church should be considered rightful members of the new integrated body. If an individual congregation prefers not to be a part of the new denomination, it can exercise its option to leave the Mennonite Church.

What prompts this heated expression? The world today is full of critical voices. Pickiness prevails. There is more than enough Pharisaism and judgmentalism in the larger society and church. Let us not institutionalize these negative qualities and attitudes as a practice of the new denomination.

Robert Hartzler is conference minister for Northern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church. He has also served as a pastor in the Iowa-Nebraska and Allegheny conferences of the Mennonite Church.

Recent books of interest:

Harold S. Bender 1897-1962 by Albert N. Keim (Herald Press, 1998, $23.99 U.S., $34.25 Cdn.) is a biography of a major Mennonite leader.

Three books on Mennonites in Russia are *Journeys: Mennonite Stories of Faith and Survival in Stalin's Russia* by John B. Toews and *Moving Beyond Secession: Defining Russian Mennonite Brethren Mission and Identity 1872-1922* by Abe J. Dueck (both Kindred Productions, 1998) and *The Odyssey of Escapes from Russia: The Saga of Anna K* by Wilmer A. Harms (Hearth Publishing, 1998).

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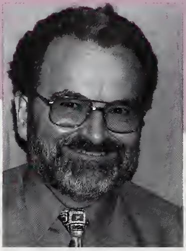

J. Lorne Peachey

That we may be one (1)

Diversity is a gift from God

Consider the family reunion. We go anticipating Aunt Mollie's potato salad, Grandpa Friesen's bear hugs and Uncle Elmer's funny stories. But an hour into the celebration, we remember why we have these only once a year. Uncle Elmer's jokes may be funny, but they're also sexist and sometimes crude. Aunt Mollie may have the best potato salad in seven states, but she also has a tongue that can skewer everyone she knows in those states.

"The family is a funny institution," writes Mary W. Anderson in the June 17-24 issue of *The Christian Century.* While our times and culture value having choices as a "God-given right," we also champion the family, a body about which we have no choice as to who is our sibling, our grandparent, our cousin.

It is no accident that we have come to talk of church as family. After we join the church, we should have little choice about who is a member: Anyone who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and is baptized is part of the family.

We should love them all. That is the point of much of the writing about the church in the New Testament. The apostle John is most pointed about this: "Whoever does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8). "Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen" (1 John 4:20b).

The Spirit blends our differences into a family that is completely different and much better than any of its individual members standing alone.

Knowing we are to love doesn't mean we like all in our church family. We'll find many Aunt Mollies and Uncle Elmers with whom we disagree on many things. But they are still part of the family. Wanting that family to be better, we long for more unity and oneness, and in that longing we begin to see our disagreements as evil.

Not so, writes Anderson. Diversity was created by God. "We do right when we understand our differences as gifts of God and not devices of the devil," she says. These differences make our church family more alive and dynamic, appealing to all sorts of people with many needs and interests. The result of this diversity is more than the sum of the parts. The Spirit blends our differences into a family that is completely different and much better than any of its individual members standing alone.

This sense of diversity as a gift from God may well be tested in the months ahead as we go into the more difficult work of integration. As Robert Hartzler notes in "Speaking Out" this issue (page 15), we already know what one of the difficult questions will be: Who can belong to the new Mennonite Church?

In the current Mennonite Church (MC), a congregation joins an area conference and thereby the denomination. In the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), congregations can belong to either an area conference or the denomination—or both.

Which will we follow in the new denomination? That's a concern for several congregations that have lost membership in an MC area conference because they accept noncelibate homosexuals as members. At the same time, at least three of these continue to be part of the GC church. What will be their status in the new denomination?

In other words, will any congregation that's now either GC or MC automatically be part of the integrated church? Or will there be some criteria set up to determine who can and cannot belong to the new Mennonite Church?

Hartzler takes a strong stand on this issue. Feelings are equally strong on the other side. So the general boards have appointed a membership committee to work with this question.

As that committee works, we'll be tempted to grow weary of our differences. "It's bad enough as we now are," we'll say. "Why make it worse by bringing GCs and MCs together?"

It is then that we must once again remind ourselves that diversity is a gift from God. We will be better because we are different. We can become a loving family, even though we may not always be happy with everything about this family. We can find our way through our disagreements, even about membership. More about that next week—*jlp*

the Mennonite

July 21, 1998

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9 Making house calls half a world away
14 What can we affirm about heaven?
20 Since we won't reach consensus

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

God and country

I find myself disagreeing with Walter S. Friesen in his proposal to "Transform Independence Day" (June 23). Independence Day is a holiday promoting not just war but also the values that the United States has held dear from its inception. The primary value I think of when discussing July Fourth is rebellion. July Fourth is the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a statement, which, in a crude summary, states: "You did us wrong. Now we're going to have nothing to do with you. Watch us as we spit in your face."

In the United States, "life" is comfort, "liberty" is selfishness and "the pursuit of happiness" is the promotion of capitalism. I cannot celebrate these values that are uniquely connected with July Fourth. I give thanks on Thanksgiving Day for the current but temporary freedom found in this secular nation in which I happen to reside. I will hold to the values of sacrificial love, the opportunities of peace and joy amid trials and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I cannot, nor can my family, celebrate a holiday on a date firmly connected with an article of rebellion. Instead, let us affirm a day in our own calendar to celebrate the future consummation of the kingdom of God, of which we are supposed to be citizens.—*Steve Kimes, Portland, Ore.*

As I read articles such as "Transform Independence Day" by Walter S. Friesen and "The Mythical Society" by J. Denny Weaver (both June 23), I am disappointed. I interpret both to be just another harangue against our country because their tone can hardly be defined as constructive criticism. In "The Mythical Society," Weaver states, "We Mennonites need to know who we are." And who are we? A people so self-righteous and set-apart that we cannot be thankful to those, many of them Christians, who gave the sacrifice of their lives to stop cruelty and killing of innocents in countries far less fortunate than our own?

Every day I say thank you to the men and women who are now incapacitated or who have died for justice in liberating other human beings from extreme cruelty, despair and death. The freedoms we enjoy were made available to us with someone's blood, sweat and tears, and some of the donors were our neighbors, our relatives and our friends. To forget this would be sad.

All Christians are praying for mercy and justice. May we follow the torch as God leads us forward, and as we look back let us not forget to say thank you to those who have purchased our liberty with their lives. As we celebrate Independence Day, this must be remembered and expressed.—*Betty G. Alderfer, Souderton, Pa.*

Friesen's article is wonderful! The idea of using a sacred national holiday that celebrates our violent history to celebrate some of the nonviolent, Christ-motivated history of our nation may provide some positive options to extend the love of God. Friesen is right: Fourth of July celebrations have caused me to groan inwardly and be embarrassed about what we are celebrating more than once. Peace Sunday promotions have been well intended, but we have somehow managed to alienate people and create ill will instead of goodwill with our celebration of it. Lord, let there be a transformation of the celebration of Independence Day. Show us the way.—*John Otto, South Hutchinson, Kan.*

Typologies of masculinity

Everett J. Thomas' "Masculinity with Integrity" (June 16) left me a tad perplexed. The borrowed archetypes cannot be faithfully squeezed into a biblical mold, nor can they easily be appropriated for Christian spirituality. Nor is it clear, given that men continue to be at the head of nearly every Mennonite agency and institution, how exactly men have been "eunuchized" or who did the "eunuchization." Nor is it reasonable to think that partially sharing church leadership with women would castrate men.

Even allowing for the use of the author's categories and definitions, it seems evident that 1990s Mennonite men are more able to be "lovers," "magicians" and "warriors" than ever before. That only leaves in the purported vacuum the quest for power implicit in the "king" archetype. In the contemporary church, what no one person—male or female—can be is such a ruler. And that's a good thing. Thank God for the wisdom and maturity of such a church which instead derives its leadership models from the servanthood of Christ.—*Keith Graber Miller, Goshen, Ind.*

I wonder whether the terms "king" and "warrior" provide useful models for men in our churches. Inevitably, "warrior" and "king" mean fighting and male rulership, even when we try to redefine them. Do we need more

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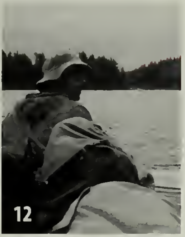

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Since it's highly unlikely we'll reach consensus

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s say readers say

fighters and male rulers in our churches than we already have? It is difficult, if not impossible, to redefine "warrior" and "king" thoroughly enough that they may be used in reference to God. Wouldn't using these terms in reference to men take us back under the sexism and violence from which we have been trying to escape?

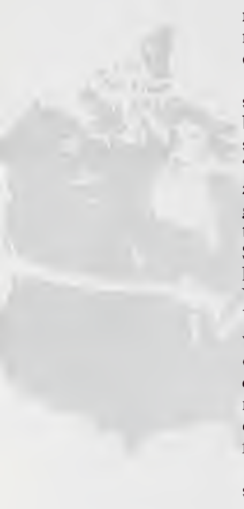
Terms like "friend," "peacebuilder," "creator" and "co-worker" (along with "magician" and "lover," perhaps) reinforce ideals to which men as well as women may aspire. I think we do well to choose words that already mea what we want them to mean.—*Kathleen Temple, Harrisonburg, Va.*

I do not share the assumption that men have something called "four archetypal energies." Given the historical and cultural forces that have shaped the concepts of masculinity and femininity in nations, religions and cultures around the world, it seems to me both naive and dangerous to work out of a set of categories alleged to represent "primordial energies." The issues involved are considerably more complex and theological.

I applaud the recognition that a cultural/theological problem does exist and agree that efforts should be made to address the it. To borrow a biblical metaphor, however, an effort to exorcise this demon will require much prayer and fasting, not to speak of a continuing rigorous intellectual inquiry. —*Hubert W. Morrow, Russellville, Ark.*

I'm attracted by another typology—the qualities of "repentant man": profundity of suffering, depth of experience, ability to make choices in the light of free will and capacity to create. —*Jon Olson, Pittsburgh*

Cover photo by Larry Penner



Don't go home

Our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* affirms that "divisions between nations, races, classes and genders are being healed" (Article 9) and that "the church knows no geographical boundaries." The present move toward two national churches contradicts both of these faith affirmations.

If pursued, the move will send a clear message to people like myself on both sides of the border who have seen value in studying or serving across the border. The message is, "Go home where you belong!" I, as a U.S. citizen, have benefited richly from serving a congregation in Canada, and I hope my congregation has as well. I intend to return to the United States and will do so with a new perspective on how to be a faithful citizen in a secular society. While I clearly acknowledge the imbalances in U.S.-Canadian relations, I am perplexed about why it is so bad for us to sit in on one another's discussions of "national issues" in conference settings. While the imbalances need correcting, it is not a waste of time to hear from one another about how we are seeking to be faithful in our secular societies.

If there must be national bodies north and south of the border, let them be. But think again about whether we don't need any binational structures. I predict that if we don't have any organic links and simply trust our "good neighborliness," our "intentional partnering" will be a farce.—*S. Roy Kaufman, Laird, Sask.*

Flexible pacifism?

I've seldom read an article with such mixed feelings as "Make Room for the Spirit" (May 19). I applaud Glen Guyton for his courage in leaving the Air Force. In doing so, he has made a far bolder peace statement than most of us who have been part of a peace church all of our lives. Yet the overall tenor of the article is that a Spirit-led church won't "make pacifism a pressing issue" since God is obviously quite neutral and flexible on such matters.

The big question the article doesn't address is how should Mennonites or other Christians in uniform respond to the inevitable call to put their training to use? What if orders they are already sworn to obey put the lives of fellow Christians at risk or result in unbelievers being killed without ever knowing God loves them? It sounds good to speak of "allowing God to work rather than letting church legislation do the work of Christ." But in practice this means turning over the church's moral responsibility in this area to another act of legislation, that of Congress in declaring a war, and to the military chain of command in carrying it out.

It seems so ironic that as a church we're being urged to be more flexible and less legalistic in deference to one of the least flexible (most coercive, regulated and autocratic) institutions in our society. In light of that, and the fact that in war soldiers are called on to disregard virtually every command in Scripture, it shouldn't be surprising that some Christians would just say no to the whole enterprise. I had always hoped that Mennonite believers around the world would be among them, as affirmed in Article 22 of our confession of faith: "As disciples of Christ, we do not prepare for war, or participate in war or military service."—*Harvey Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Pharisees and stories

The long-running debates over homosexuality have seemed quite lopsided; homosexual practice is difficult to justify with the Scriptures. Recently, though, I found Jesus in Matthew 23 rephrasing this thorny issue, as he so often does. The Pharisees are condemned for laying heavy loads on others that they themselves could not carry. We too have placed heavy burdens upon the homosexual. That burden is not so much that of celibacy. The burden is a life of loneliness. The Pharisees are also condemned for shutting off the kingdom of heaven from men. Given our history of excluding homosexuals, are we not likewise guilty?

I see now that the sin of blocking others' way into the kingdom is so fundamentally wrong that it overshadows our valid concerns about homosexual practice. We must first redress our sin of exclusion, clearly welcome homosexuals as we would any other guest and seek practical answers to their dilemma. Until then, we are merely Pharisees accurately diagnosing the sins of others with our exclusion of them heaping judgment on our own heads.—*Roger Haun, York, Pa.*

Perhaps we have had enough theologizing on homosexuality. Maybe what we need to hear now are individual's stories. It is easy to make blanket statements, but we live out our lives in a more specific fashion. The Bible is ripe with stories of how individuals encountered God. Perhaps if we heard each other's stories, specifics of how we encounter God in our lives, we could find common ground.—*Sandra Z. Richardson, Seattle*

The evolution of integration

Once against merger, conference eyes dual affiliation

North Central Conference wasn't very keen on merging the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC).

Conference delegates voted against integration at the joint GC-MC convention at Wichita, Kan., in 1995. Before Wichita '95, North Central, an MC area conference including congregations in Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota and Wisconsin, turned down several invitations to hold annual meetings with its regional GC counterpart, Northern District Conference.

That was then, this is now.

Next month, after nearly three years of exploration, North Central, Northern District and Iowa-Nebraska, another MC area conference, will vote on a recommendation to restructure the three into two dual-affiliated conferences. The three conferences will hold joint annual meetings Aug. 6-9 in Mountain Lake, Minn.

If approved, the proposal would create the third merger of GC and MC area conferences. Ten years ago, one GC and two MC conferences formed the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. Six years later, another GC and two more MC conferences reconfigured to create Pacific Northwest and Pacific Southwest.

The reason for North Central's about-face, says Galen Kauffman, is that even though the conference had and still has concerns, integration has been approved by GC and MC delegates. "We're part of the church. ... We're moving ahead on faith," says Kauffman, a North Central representative to the tri-conference committee bringing the integration recommendation.

The committee, created in 1995 after the Wichita decision, is proposing a north conference, comprised of the congregations in northern Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota and Wisconsin, plus one congregation in Ontario now relating to North Central. A south conference would include Iowa, southern Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota. GC congregations in Montana would have the option of joining either conference. In addition, the six GC congregations in Iowa, now part of the Central District Conference, would be invited to join the new conference—with the blessing of Central District, says Central District conference minister Lloyd Miller.

If the proposal passes, an integration implementation committee would be formed to work on polity and structures. There is no timetable in the recommendation.

Part of North Central's concerns are due to its size: It has less than 500 members in 14 congregations, which helps give the conference a "family feel," Kauffman says, something North Central does not want to jeopardize. That has been met with understanding by the other conferences. "So we basically honored that and left the northern tier intact," says Steve Ratzlaff, a Northern District representative on the integration committee.

Another concern for North Central is women in pastoral leadership. The conference does not ordain women while the other two conferences do.—*Rich Preheim*

> **We're part of the church. ... We're moving ahead on faith.**
>
> —*Galen Kauffman*

Merger idea moves ahead in Great Lakes region

After years of cooperation, the Mennonite Church (MC) area conferences of Illinois, Indiana-Michigan and Ohio plus Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) are on the verge of starting down the path to regional merger.

Ohio delegates, meeting July 10-12 in Bluffton, Ohio, became the third of the four conferences to approve a proposal to form an integration exploration committee to bring a merger plan to an anticipated regional gathering in 2000. Only two Ohio delegates voted against the proposal, says conference minister Tom Kauffman.

Illinois, by a 77-14 vote, and Central District, by a 236-8 vote, passed the proposal at assemblies earlier this year. Indiana-Michigan delegates will cast their ballots at their annual meeting July 23-25.

The proposal also would dissolve the East Central States Inter-Mennonite Council (ECSIC), which recommended the measure. The council, made up of representatives from the four conferences, fosters cooperation among the groups.

ECSIC co-chair Sherm Kauffman, Indiana-Michigan executive secretary, expects his conference to also pass the proposal. Doing so would put all the conferences in the same position, an important consideration for starting the integration process. "It strengthens the effort," he says. "Otherwise, one of ... the conferences gets put behind the eight ball. It sets up a new set of dynamics."—*Rich Preheim with GCMC News Service*

South Central's no-win situation

Church withdraws over gay issue despite expulsion vote

In the aftermath of its decision to expel a congregation over homosexuality, the South Central Conference has drawn criticism for the action—and for not acting quickly enough. In the end, South Central stands to lose not one but two congregations, further highlighting the divisiveness of this highly charged issue.

"It's no-win for the conference," says Howard Keim, whose recently completed term as South Central moderator was punctuated by the disciplining of Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan., because of its openness to accepting noncelibate homosexuals as members.

After a mail-in vote by conference delegates, the South Central executive committee decided in March to "loose" Rainbow from membership effective March 1, 1999. The added year is intended to provide time for Rainbow to make a change in its position.

But that was not good enough for Zion Mennonite Church in Pryor, Okla. In a letter to the conference and its congregations, Zion reported that it voted on May 17 to withdraw from South Central, effective immediately. Noting the "infallible, authoritative Word of God," the letter states, "We choose to take this step because we cannot condone the conference's action to allow Rainbow Mennonite Church to continue as restricted members."

Rainbow, which has said it does not intend to change its position, was placed on restricted member status when the conference and congregation started a dialogue process two years ago.

South Central delegates voted 52 percent to expel Rainbow with another 13 percent supporting continuing restricted membership. Those were the only options on the ballot, other than a write-in category. Twenty-eight percent wrote in that no action be taken or that Rainbow be restored to full membership. Six percent indicated no preference.

In a written response to the expulsion decision, Rainbow criticized the ballot for listing only options for discipline. "As such, we believe [the vote] was badly flawed if not biased," the statement says.

But Zion saw the vote as revealing "a large movement within [South Central] membership to bless Rainbow's long-standing decision to accept practicing homosexuals into membership."

Keim says the adamant positions on both sides, as represented by Rainbow and Zion, prevented finding a solution. "We have not been able to meet in the middle," he says. Keim had hoped Rainbow could "suggest some modification" in their position while the other congregations "would make some allowance for at least a limited membership."

But Zion pastor Duey Matthews says, "Is there a compromise for sin? No. There is no middle ground."

Frank Ward, pastor of Rainbow, says his congregation offered to publicly acknowledge its variance with the official church position. While conversations between Rainbow and South Central were cordial, in the end the conference wanted the congregation to at least withdraw from the Supportive Congregations Network, which Rainbow was unwilling to do, Ward says. SCN is an organization of Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations accepting of noncelibate homosexuals. Rainbow has been an SCN member since 1990.

Rainbow also criticizes the conference action's description as "loosed" from membership, saying it suggests that the congregation sought to be removed from South Central. "We reject this interpretation," the statement says. "We do not believe the use of 'loosed' absolves the conference of responsibility for the action it plans to take in March 1999."

A proposal presented at South Central's annual meeting July 3-5 said a congregation's extended time of noncompliance to a conference position shall be interpreted as "a decision to remove themselves from conference membership," after which the congregation would face further conference disciplinary action, including the possibility of expulsion. The proposal was sent back to its committee for further work.—*Rich Preheim*

Conference actions against congregations accepting noncelibate homosexuals as members

- **Under suspension:** Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind., and Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., by Indiana-Michigan Conference; Oak Park (Ill.) Mennonite Church and Maple Avenue Mennonite Church, Waukesha, Wis., by Illinois Conference; Atlanta (Ga.) Mennonite Fellowship by Southeast Conference.
- **Expelled:** Ames (Iowa) Mennonite Church by Iowa-Nebraska Conference; Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, by Franconia Conference; Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan., by South Central Conference (effective March 1, 1999).

Service keeps their motors running

"Put gas in my Ford, keep me trucking for the Lord," goes the old camp song. But for members of Hopewell Mennonite Church, Elverson, Pa., the petroleum is oil. And it's not going into their own engines.

For the past year, the congregation has been conducting a Car Care Saturday once every quarter. A ministry targeted for single mothers and widows, volunteers offer free oil changes and general inspections of vehicles' conditions. Money from a congregational fund is available to make repairs and replacements. An estimated six to 12 vehicles get serviced each time.

12 years of work by AIMM workers in Burkina Faso produces elders' meeting with the Holy Spirit

N'DOROLA, Burkina Faso—Bringing the message of Christ to an unchurched people can take years of dedication. Add to that the difficulty of translating Scripture into a language filled with nuances that take many years to learn, and the process can seem too daunting to be worth the attempt. Sometimes, however, the gospel can take root in just such a situation.

Dan and Kathy Petersen went to N'dorola, Burkina Faso, with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) in 1984 to plant a church among the Nanerige people. They were joined six years later by Phil and Carol Bergen.

They have been assisted by a local Christian, Maliki Loze Watara. He began working as a linguistic assistant with Dan Petersen about 10 years ago, coordinating Scripture translation into the Nanerige language. As Watara learned Scripture, he came to accept Christ.

The dedication of Watara and the missionary team recently paid off when elders in the village of Silorola accepted Christ.

Petersen and Watara had recorded onto cassette tapes a translation of Scripture selections from Genesis through Pentecost. After getting permission to speak to the village elders—made possible because Watara was from the village—they played a group of passages at each visit, stopping after each one for discussion.

After the first session, the elders asked the team to return every third day until they had finished all the passages. The elders' initial reaction, Watara says, was, "We have always thought that God made the world just as it is today, the good with the bad. But now we understand that God did not want the illness, the death and all the other evils that seem so much a part of our lives. That was not his plan, but it was the result of our own rebellion and refusal to obey him."

AIMM

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission worker Dan Petersen (back row, right) sits with village elders at a meeting with AIMM workers translating parts of the Bible into the local language. The elders recently accepted Christ and agreed to share the translations in the village.

During the following weeks, Petersen, Watara and Phil Bergen returned to Silorola and eventually played through all the tapes. During the last session, the group heard about the death and resurrection of Christ.

"The last verse we had translated was Acts 2:39," Petersen says. "The tape stopped there with Peter's words that God's promise is for all people. … Upon completion of the tape, the elders initially responded by saying, 'When will we have more of this ready to listen to? This isn't enough; we need more!' "

The elders were told it would be up to them to organize any follow-up in the village with the taped passages. The elders decided they would share the passages with whoever wished to listen, so that each person in the village could decide for themselves whether to accept the message.

"Through the message—which was nothing more or less than God's Word in their language—we were able to bring about a meeting between a room full of Nanerige elders and the Holy Spirit," Petersen says. "We hope that once God's Word is written on the hearts of a few, then the mustard-seed principle starts to work."—*Brad Thiessen for AIMM News Service*

Giving Project extended 2 years

ELKHART, Ind.—The steering committee for The Giving Project has extended the General Conference Mennonite Church(GC)-Mennonite Church (MC) stewardship initiative for two more years. Closing date is now June 30, 2002.

"The decision was made primarily to allow more churches to participate," says committee member Vyron Schmidt. "We are also responding to the enthusiasm building for stewardship issues in the church."

Early projections had 5 percent GC and MC congregations participating—about 80 congregations. But more than 300 are involved.

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

Drilling duo

Delmar Weaver, Ephrata, Pa., (left) and Nick Lay, Philadelphia, drill drywall nails at Philadelphia Cambodian Mennonite Church. About 10 members of Weaver's congregation, Martindale Mennonite Church, spent June 27 helping renovate the Philadelphia church, where Lay's father is pastor.

Classic effort

Owen Hess of Goshen, Ind., prepares to return a shot to Rollin Rheinheimer of Jonestown, Pa., during a singles' tennis match at the first Mennonite Senior Sports Classic, held June 24-27 on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus and other area sites. Hess was the champion in his age category. The classic drew 180 participants between the ages of 50 and 93.

Steve Echols

CPT partner's home destroyed

It was the second time for the Al-Atrash family. It was the first time for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT).

Israeli troops on June 11 destroyed the home of Palestinians Yussuf and Zuhoor Al-Atrash and their 10 children. The family had rebuilt following the destruction of their previous home by Israeli soldiers only three months earlier.

This was the first family in CPT's Campaign for Secure Dwellings to have its home demolished. The campaign connects North American congregations with Palestinian families facing the loss of their homes. The Al-Atrash family is linked with Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Some dozen U.S. and Canadian congregations are participating in the campaign. They are encouraged to develop relations with their Palestinian partners and advocate on their behalf. *—CPT News Service*

Even though issue no longer in vogue, agencies still pushing for health-care reform

WASHINGTON— A mere four years ago, lobbyists and advocates swarmed the capital trying to influence the biggest issue in town: health-care reform.

Everyone—insurance companies, doctors, politicians—talked about the importance of universal coverage, trying to deal with the crisis of 37 million uninsured Americans. But today, the subject appears out of style.

But as the problem gets worse, the issue remains in vogue for several Mennonite organizations advocating for people without adequate health care. Last month, leaders of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Mennonite Medical Association, Mennonite Nurses Association and Greencroft, a Mennonite retirement community in Goshen, Ind., sent a joint letter to every U.S. senator, urging serious attention be given to the issue of universal health care.

"Congress has shied away from comprehensive health-care reform ever since the 1994 debate failed to produce results," the letter states.

The church's concern comes "from our belief in the sanctity and dignity of persons created in God's image," says Karl Shelly, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. legislative associate. "If the current situation is truly an affront to our biblical understanding of justice, then we are compelled to speak out, especially given the recent inattention of policy makers."

The letter notes that "universal health care cannot be achieved solely through the efforts of the faith community, nor can market forces bring about this end. What we need is for Congress to implement a comprehensive national health-care policy."

After a few years of intense debate, Congress has taken no action on health care. The clumsiness of President Clinton's reform proposal and the unprecedented $46 million that health and insurance industry lobbyists funneled into congressional pockets effectively killed the opportunity for comprehensive reform. Congress turned its attention to other issues, and the health-care crisis seemed to fade away.

Yet many of the troubling indicators that brought the issue to the forefront still exist and have grown worse. Today, nearly 42 million Americans are uninsured, according to the Census Bureau. These people are three to four times more likely to postpone or not receive needed medical care because of cost.

"I continue to believe that universal health care is the only solution to get at the uninsured," says Greencroft president Gene Yoder. "The situation will continue to worsen."

Resolutions adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1992 and the Mennonite Church in 1993 included a call for a U.S. health-care system accessible to everyone. The resolutions also emphasized the role of community and congregation in encouraging healthy lifestyles and healing. *—MCC News Service with Rich Preheim*

Making house calls to half a world away

Pa. doctor assists MCC worker injured in Bangladesh

EPHRATA, Pa. — A. Richard Weaver of Ephrata, Pa., doesn't often fly halfway around the world, step off the plane for four hours and then fly home. But when the opportunity occurs, he rises to the occasion.

On June 16, just 16 hours after being contacted by Mennonite Central Committee, Weaver began his journey to meet and escort Alan Bennett, an MCC worker in Bangladesh, back to the United States following a serious accident in which Bennett's motorcycle collided with a bus. With a crushed hip and two broken wrists, Bennett needed a medical escort during the two-day flight home to Seattle for surgery. A retired surgeon with previous MCC experience, Weaver fit the bill for service.

"Here was a fellow who needed rescue," Weaver says. "I couldn't get it out of my mind. He went to Bangladesh in good confidence that if he gave himself to service, he would be taken care of. That was the burden I felt and I found it difficult to say no."

With his family's support, Weaver undertook the mission. Even his youngest daughter, Valerie, who was to be married in less than two weeks, consented to his departure. "She gave her blessing for him to go," says Ed Martin, MCC program director for Central and Southern Asia. "That really freed him."

The journey went smoothly but not without anxiety. "My biggest concern was the uncertainty of Alan's condition and whether or not he would be in shape to travel," Weaver says. Those worries dwindled when Weaver first met Bennett. "I saw he was probably going to do OK," Weaver says. "He looked stable and in the best possible shape for travel, given the circumstances."

Weaver's assignment was to keep Bennett comfortable during the flight home to Washington. With both arms in casts, Bennett was "pretty helpless to even scratch his nose," Weaver says. He administered liquids every 10 to 15 minutes and gave Bennett pain reliever injections every four to five hours. A six-hour layover in London allowed time to clean and prepare for the final nine-hour flight to Seattle.

Despite being in constant pain, Bennett proved an amicable traveling companion. "He's a great spirit to be with and very joyful in the expectation of full recovery," Weaver says.

Bennett remained on a stretcher throughout the trip. British Airways allotted nine seats to the pair, six with the backs down to accommodate the stretcher and three more for Weaver to use while assisting Bennett. British Airways provided MCC a discount on the seats.

Weaver credited Sarah Wittmeyer, an MCC nurse in Bangladesh, with Bennett's good condition. Wittmeyer and her husband, Jay, cared for Bennett as he underwent surgery in Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital. A week later it was decided he should fly home to the United States for further medical treatment.

MCC administrators began contacting doctors in the United States who they thought might be available. "I was free," says Weaver, who has been doing some seminary studies this summer. "I went because there was a great need for a quick response and there was no one else who was immediately available."

Bennett

Martin was pleased with Weaver's service. "Things were handled well," he says. "Richard provided good medical knowledge along with pastoral-type skills."

Martin is also relieved that Bennett's condition is not worse. "Given the accident, he is very lucky to be alive," Martin says. "He was fortunate to be wearing a helmet. His helmet apparently had a big gash in it."

Bennett, an engineer who worked with MCC's job creation program in Bangladesh, has every intention of completing the second half of his three-year MCC term. "I'm committed to my therapy," he says. "I will return to Bangladesh in one manner or another when the time is right."

Rehabilitation could take as long as a year, and a hip replacement is not out of the question. Bennett now gets around with a walker using elbow supports because of his arm casts. "I'm sort of a sight," he says. "I have two good elbows and one good leg."

Bennett, now recuperating at home in Tacoma, Wash., calls Weaver "the most loving and caring guy to be my transport angel that I could think of."

Weaver, meanwhile, returned to the joy of his daughter's wedding and to continue his seminary studies. "I was grateful for the prayers of so many people," he said. "Although I was on planes for three nights in a row, I didn't feel as bad as I have after one overnight trip. I arrived in Seattle in miraculously good shape by the grace of God."—*JoJo Fisher for MCC News Service*

I went because there was a great need for a quick response and there was no one else who was immediately available.

—A. Richard Weaver

Mennonites attend mission conference

Four Mennonites were among the nearly 140 people from around the world who participated in a consultation on Christian mission strategy, held June 23-27 at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

Among those registered were Florence Driedger, social worker from Regina, Sask.; Johannes Reimer, mission professor from Storchenweg, Germany; Walter Sawatsky, professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.; and James Scherer, retired mission professor from Oak Park, Ill.

The ecumenical group discussed concerns about missionary activity and made recommendations for future mission work.

MBM workers share love, lives in remote Russian republic

ELKHART, Ind.—Mennonite Board of Missions worker Phil Shenk says that when God opens doors, believers need to walk through.

When a door opened in 1996, the Shenk family started walking and hasn't looked back. Phil and Alice Hertzler Shenk and five of their six children left their home in Springfield, Ohio, two years ago and headed for Dagestan, a remote mountain republic in the southernmost reaches of Russia, to be a Christian presence in a land long dominated by Islam.

The family lives and works among the Tabasarans, one of the 35 language groups in Dagestan. About 100,000 Tabasarans live in the villages surrounded by the Caucasus mountains. The Shenks feel they are to be a catalyst to the formation of an authentically Tabasaran-culture Christian movement.

"Our position there is to be friends of the people and to seek to be a blessing however we can," Phil Shenk says. "We want to be Christians among them, thus giving them the opportunity for Jesus if they want it."

Alice is a nurse, and Phil teaches English in a local school. In order to better identify with the people and develop friendships, the family has made an effort to assimilate into the Tabasaran lifestyle. They do not always have electricity and must draw their water from a well a quarter-mile away. Alice and her daughters wash the family's clothes at the well, sharing water and conversation with the women.

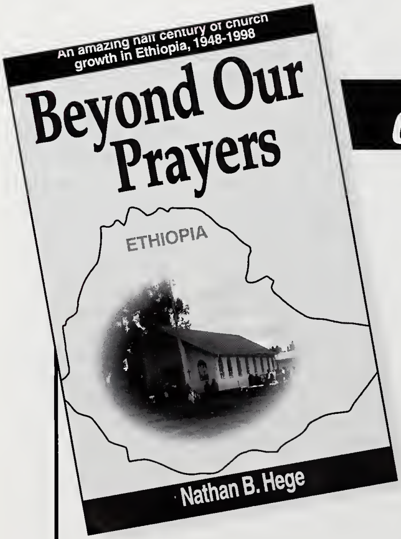
In the past few months, the Shenks have begun to see spiritual changes in the lives of their neighbors and friends. Phil attributes this to the relationships they have made, to the influence of the Tabasaran-language *Jesus* film and to the power of God.

"Cracks started to appear in the rigid walls," Phil says. "There was a hunger for unconditional love and grace. Our number one theme is watching and waiting to see what God is doing, and he is working."—*Rachel Lewis of MBM News Service*

Back in the fall of 1996, while many of Deborah Shenk's high-school friends were taking college freshman English, she was learning Russian and Tabasaran.

Shenk joined the rest of her family on a Mennonite Board of Missions assignment in Dagestan. "I could have started college right away, but I didn't want to pass up this opportunity," Shenk says.

She returned to the United States last fall for her freshman year at Taylor University in Upland, Ind. —*Rachel Lewis of MBM News Service*



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Reflections

Time to take off my shoes

J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president

No commitment of my first full year at AMBS seemed more important than weekly meetings I had with seven senior students for a "Growth in Ministry" seminar. Along with many hours in the library and many papers to write, ministry students at AMBS have leadership responsibilities in congregations. They gather weekly to reflect on the meaning of their call.

Two members of my seminar group had come to AMBS from years of mission work and other service overseas and were preparing for assignments in North American congregations. Two more were natives of Latin America and intended to go back to serve the Mennonite church in their home countries; one has aspirations of starting an Anabaptist seminary. A Methodist pastor-in-training added the valuable perspective of her faith tradition, and two young women from North American Mennonite communities were making career changes from teaching and youth work.

I often had the urge to take off my shoes as these committed people told the stories of their call to ministry and their growing leadership identity at AMBS. In that confidential circle we pressed one another to identify personal strengths and weaknesses for congregational leadership and prayed for each other. We worked on a steady stream of practical questions, including: How do pastors and scholars keep their own spiritual wells from running dry? What is appropriate leadership authority without being authoritarian? How should scholars and pastors deal with diversity in the church while keeping solid biblical moorings?

My seminar students nurtured me in ways that do not often happen in regular courses. I shared my struggle of having too many commitments and obligations during a first year as president. I talked candidly about the vulnerabilities I feel in a new role, and told how I have come to rely on God. I will remember those colleagues in ministry for the rest of my life.

I wish I could have learned to know all our graduates like that! While two thirds of AMBS degree students are preparing for pastoral ministry, others are completing degrees in peace studies or theological studies. Some of these will go on for further specialized degrees in preparation to teach a future generation of church leaders; they will be peacemakers or will do the scholarly reflection that helps undergird a denomination's theological identity.

This blending of scholarly excellence and commitment to the church is a burning bush through which God has spoken to many church leaders and theologians in the Mennonite church. Sometimes the struggles of denominational integration or conference conflict feel like a wilderness. AMBS is one of the places where God is meeting people who tend sheep, calling them to give their lives to the hard and wonderful task of pointing a people toward a new identity, a new place, and a radical commitment to faithfulness.

As I finish writing these words, a student from my seminar group stops by to tell me he just returned from candidating for pastoral leadership in a large congregation. "My weekend visit went very well," he says. There is fire in his eyes, the reflection of a burning bush in his life. "I'll pray for you as you await the next steps in your call," say I. Once again, it's time to take off my shoes.

Inside

Graduates prepared for serving the church

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January at AMBS

AMBS window

Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

Graduates prepared for serving the church

Forty-one students graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on May 22. Twenty-eight received the Master of Divinity; two the Master of Arts in Peace Studies; ten the Master of Arts in Theological Studies and one the Certificate in Theological Studies.

Senait Abebe MATS in Christian Education. Will pursue further studies in pastoral counseling. "AMBS has been meaningful to me in many ways: It helped me to increase my knowledge and take a position in my faith journey. I came to appreciate what I believe after I came to the seminary." Senait is married to Girma Bekele and they have two children. She is a member of the Mennonite church in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Neil Amstutz MDiv. Plans are in process. "At AMBS I have found grace, personal and spiritual growth, strengthened pastoral skills and identity, and a great community for me and my family." Neil is married to Janette L. Amstutz and they have three children. He is a member of West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan. His parents are Clifford and Lois Amstutz of Hesston, Kan.

Anil Bagh MATS in Christian Education. Will study in Amsterdam for a month, then do further practical work in California. "Growing spiritually has been part of my experience at AMBS. The community life and teaching at AMBS helped me to do the real work of being a pastor—which is helping people pay attention to God." Anil is the son of Rev. J.S. Bagh and Mrs. K. Bagh of Saraipali, District Raipur, India. He is a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church of India.

Bob Bodem MDiv. Plans in process. "I experienced great academic challenges during my years at AMBS but my most significant growth came with the challenge toward personal awareness and understanding of myself." Bob and Paulette, his wife, have three children. He is a member of Beulah Missionary Church, Goshen, Ind. His parents are Earl and Shirley Bodem, Sarasota, Fla.

Brian Burkholder MDiv. Will be program director of Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich. "Many biblical passages have come to life and the major canonical themes have been lifted. Further, my spiritual life has been greatly nurtured." Brian is a member of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio; and an associate member of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind. His parents are Reda Burkholder, Apple Creek, Ohio, and the late James Burkholder.

Lora Braun MDiv. Will serve with Mennonite Central Committee teaching English in Lesotho. "The academic, practical, social and spiritual aspects of my seminary experience have prepared me well for ministry in the church and the world." Lora is a member of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., and her parents are Johanna and Norman Braun of Winkler.

Catherine A. DeGroote MATS in Christian Spirituality. Plans in process. Catherine is a member of St. Vincent DePaul Catholic Church, Elkhart, Ind. She is the mother of two children and the daughter of Robert and Anne M. Richardson, Goshen, Ind.

Joel Dick MAPS. Will pursue further studies in law and international relations at the University of Toronto (Ont.). "Seminary has been an enjoyable time of learning and spiritual renewal." He is the son of Linda Dick of Leamington, Ont.

Left to right: Senait Abebe, Neil Amstutz, Lora Braun, Brian Burkholder, Catherine DeGroote, Joel Dick
Not pictured: Anil Bagh, Bob Bodem

Natasha Sawatsky, 1998 MATS graduate, talks with Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor of theology and ethics

Gordon Driedger MDiv. Plans are in process. "I have developed a deeper appreciation for the church as not just an institution but as a living, exciting expression of God among us." Gordon and Pam, his wife, have one daughter. His parents are Albert and Mary Driedger of Grunthal, Man.

Karen Unruh Ediger MDiv. Plans are in process. "The significance of what I learned is due to the fact that learning takes place at a variety of levels—including intellectual, spiritual and experiential." Karen is married to Glen W. Ediger and they have one son. She is a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan. Her parents are Ruth L. Unruh, Goessel, Kan., and the late Ernest G. Unruh.

Michael Gladfelter MDiv. Will become pastor of Pennville United Methodist Church near Portland, Ind. "Many professors showed sincere care and took a personal interest in my success. Learning and sharing with students from around the world were highlights for me." Michael and Kate, his wife, have three children. He is a member of Inwood United Methodist Church. His father is Eli Gladfelter of Indianapolis.

Joan Hockman MATS in Christian Spirituality and Church History. Will serve as a spiritual director and retreat leader. Joan is married to John E. Hockman and is the daughter of Donald and Margaret Lattimore of Greenville, S.C. She is a member of Topeka Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

Anita Janzen MDiv. Pastor of Hanover Mennonite Church, Hanover, Ont. "I was surprised and pleased at the atmosphere and reality of the spirituality on campus." Anita is a member of Toronto United Mennonite Church. Her father is Henry Janzen of Vineland.

Rhoda J. Keener Certificate in Theological Studies. Will continue working in mental health administration and counseling at Oaklawn Psychiatric Center, Goshen, Ind. "A certificate in theology has enabled me to choose courses and do projects that have had personal interest and meaning for me." She and Bob Keener, her husband, have three children. They attend Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Left to right: Gordon Driedger, Karen Unruh Ediger, Michael Gladfelter, Joan Hockman, Anita Janzen, Rhoda Keener

1998 graduate Anil Bagh and Rosalyn Groff talk with Mary Ellen Meyer at the reception following the commencement service. Anil came to AMBS two years ago from India and completed a MATS program in Christian Education. He plans to pursue further training before returning to India.

Anita Yoder Kehr MDiv. Plans in process. "My seminary experience has yielded growth of all kinds: spiritual, intellectual, psychological and emotional. I am grateful for the depth of the experiences I have received." Anita and Bryan Kehr have three children. Her parents are Vernon D. and Marilyn Yoder of Goshen. She is a member of San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church.

Héctor Ricardo Liso MDiv. Will teach and continue serving as pastor of Iglesia Menonita de Florida in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He and Virginia have four children. He is the son of Héctor Miguel Liso of Buenos Aires and the late Josefina Heydee Martorelli.

Ken Litwiller MDiv. Plans in process. Ken and Laura Litwiller have two children. "As a returning student, I found new bearings at AMBS. A diverse, international community addressed specific needs. Critical questions were raised within a nurturing environment which acted to stretch and tone up my faith." Ken is a member of Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church, and is the son of Floyd and Lona Litwiller of Hopedale.

Maribeth Longacre MDiv. Plans in process. "My years at AMBS have been filled with meaningful study and rich friendships." Maribeth is a member of Bally (Pa.) Mennonite Church, and is the daughter of James C. and Ellen Rose Longacre of Barto.

Sherri Martin MDiv. Service Adventure unit leader in South Bend, Ind. "The community at AMBS has been significant to me in nurturing spiritual growth, in shaping theological reflection and in fostering networks of support." Sherri is a member of Floradale Mennonite Church, Floradale, Ont. Her parents are Allen and Pauline Martin of Floradale.

Dennis McOwen MDiv. Plans in process. "The seminary has been both a primary source of connectedness to the wider church as well as being a training ground for systematic theological discernment." Dennis and Denise McOwen have four children. He is a member of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio. He is the son of Helen McOwen of Pandora, Ohio, and the late Roger McOwen.

Corey Miller MDiv. Will serve as pastor of Tabor Mennonite Church, near Goessel, Kan., beginning July 1. "I have been deeply impressed and inspired at how caring this community of faith is. Besides delighting in the Scriptures, nurturing students' spirituality, and preparing people for pastoral ministry, the AMBS community has cared for and loved all who are part of this faith family." Corey and Nancy Miller have one daughter. His parents are Arlen and Florence Miller, Freeman, S.D.

Linda Nafziger-Meiser MATS in Christian Spirituality. Plans are in process. "My time at AMBS had been richly rewarding spiritually, academically, and in our relationships with people who are now scattered around the globe." Linda and Gary Nafziger-Meiser have two daughters. They attend Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart. Her parents are Samuel and Martha Nafziger, LaCrete, Alb.

Jasper Ndaborlor MAPS. Will return to Liberia to establish peace centers and academic peace theological instruction. "AMBS Peace theology has influenced my intellectual life. It has refashioned and academically prepared me to engage 'conflict mediation' using 'nonviolence' as a means for 'Christian peacemaking.'" Jasper and Tewah Elizabeth Ndaborlor have six children and one grandson. He is a member of Monrovia Free Pentecostal Church. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Saa Deneh Ndaborlor of Tuladu, Lofa County, Liberia.

Ed Nyce MDiv. Plans in process. "I am grateful for growth in faith, academic stimulation and wonderful relationships." Ed is a member of Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church and attends Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind. His parents are Donald and Faye Nyce, Lancaster, Pa.

Left to right: Anita Yoder Kehr, Ken Litwiller, Maribeth Longacre, Sherri Martin, Dennis McOwen, Corey Miller, Linda Nafziger-Meiser
Not pictured: Héctor Ricardo Liso

1998 graduate Gordon Driedger talks with John H. Neufeld, commencement speaker, before the service on May 22. John Neufeld is former president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man., where Gordon previously earned a bachelor of arts degree.

Tending God's garden

Using images of gardening, commencement speaker John H. Neufeld told graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, "Paul called the church to be God's field and church leaders to be gardeners."

John Neufeld, former president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man., enumerated several traits of Paul, including patience, tenderness, and passionate concern for the church. "The challenge to each gardener is to become attentive to each garden's uniqueness. We need to be come familiar with the soil and terrain before we know what will flourish," he said.

Left to right: Jasper Ndaborlor, Ed Nyce, Troy Osborne, Stephen Plenert, Steven Ratzlaff, Natasha Sawatsky
Not pictured: Steven Palmer

Troy Osborne MATS in theology and ethics. Will begin studying at the University of Minnesota this fall. "I enjoyed the exposure to current issues in theology, ethics and history in the Mennonite church." Troy is a member of Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church, and is the son of Dave and Sena Osborne of Hesston.

Steven Palmer MATS in theology and ethics. On the pastoral team of First Baptist Church, Tecumseh, Mich. Steven and Lisa Palmer have four daughters. His parents are James and Judy Palmer of Tecumseh.

Stephen Plenert MDiv. Will return to Brazil with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church. "Seminary has been a collection of meaningful courses, close relationships, challenging ideas, and a place to nurture calling. The combination with mission service terms has been a great mix!" Stephen and Janet Plenert have three daughters. They are members at Olivet Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., and have attended Southside Mennonite Fellowship, Elkhart.

Steve Ratzlaff MDiv. Will continue as pastor of First Mennonite Church, Lincoln, Neb. "I've appreciated the opportunity to take classes while I was already in the pastorate. I've been able to apply my learning directly to my congregational setting." Steve and Lynette Ratzlaff have two children. He is the son of Marie Ratzlaff of N. Newton, Kan.

Natasha Sawatsky MATS in Church History. Will continue working in a small, organic bakery; considering further study. "During my studies at the seminary I have appreciated the close contact with professors as well as the supportive community on campus." Natasha is the daughter of Walter and Margaret Sawatsky of Elkhart, originally from Manitoba.

Senait Abebe earned a MATS degree in Christian Education. Coming to AMBS from Ethiopia, she is one of four graduates from outside North America. Other countries represented were Liberia, Argentina, and India.

Left to right: Ruth Preston Schilk, Anita Schroeder Kipfer, Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Kent Davis Sensenig, Jeff Smith, Klaudia Smucker

Ruth Preston Schilk MDiv. Will pastor Lethbridge (Alb.) Mennonite Church beginning in October. "Being transformed by God through experiences of worship, varied learning opportunities, and spiritual guidance has been a testimony to God's faithfulness in my life." Ruth and Harold Schilk have two children. She is a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont. Her parents are Grant and Edith Preston of Proton Station, Ont.

Anita Schroeder Kipfer MDiv. Plans are in process. "Through worship, study and recreation my experiences at seminary have taught me about giving and receiving. Seminary is a gift. 'A gift opens doors; it gives access to the great.' Prov. 18:16." Anita is married to Bryan Schroeder Kipfer and her parents are Hartmut and Elfrieda Schroeder of Kitchener, Ont. She is a member of Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church.

Jennifer Davis Sensenig MDiv. Anticipating pastoral ministry. "At AMBS I met Jesus, again, by reading scripture and singing the Lord's Prayer. I loved soccer, our Habegger household, Greek notebooks and Kent." Jennifer is married to Kent Davis Sensenig and her parents are Keith G. and Laurel Ann Davis of Anoka, Minn. She is a member of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart.

Kent Davis Sensenig MATS in Theology and Ethics. Plans in process. "I see my seminary sojourn as a 'catechism' in Christian discipleship. My study fostered a contemporary commitment to an Anabaptist vision. Soccer, Jennifer and Canadians were cool." Kent is married to Jennifer Davis Sensenig and his parents are Donald and Doris Sensenig of Akron, Pa. He is a member of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart.

Jeff Smith MDiv. Plans in process. "My AMBS experience has continually pointed me toward and challenged me to follow the way of Jesus Christ. This pointing has truly influenced my faith." Jeff and Kathy, his wife, have one son. His parents are Ken and Brenda Smith, Palmer Lake, Colo. He is a member of Berea Mennonite Church. Atlanta, Ga.

Kaudia Smucker MDiv. Chaplain at Greencroft Healthcare Center, Goshen, Ind. "Seminary has been a place that has challenged me to explore my journey into ministry. My gifts have been encouraged and recognized as I've discovered them and used them. It has been a positive experience of growth for me."She and Robert, her husband, have two children. She is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Her parents are Jere and Sara Ann Brady, Morgantown, Pa.

Everett Thomas MDiv. Will continue as executive secretary of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. "In the early 1980s, I was profoundly influenced by the teachings of an earlier generation of professors. Returning last fall provided some perspective on changes at AMBS. The most significant is a new orientation to congregational life and pastoral ministry. This intentional focus on preparation for congregational service will make AMBS an even more important resource for the church in the future." Everett and Barbara Gunden Thomas have two children. He is a member of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. His parents are Jean Thomas of Kalona, Iowa, and the late Leon Thomas.

Jeni Hiett Umble MDiv. Will continue as co-pastor of Southside Fellowship in Elkhart, Ind. "I entered to study history and I exit as a pastor. AMBS challenged, developed and blessed my academic and pastoral interests." Jeni and Arthur Umble have one son. Her parents are Gracie Hiett of Natick, Mass.; and Bill and Patty Hiett of Hutchinson, Kan.

Tonya Ramer Wenger MDiv. Will participate in a Clinical Pastoral Education residency program, University Medical Center, Tucson, Ariz. "AMBS gave me the space, nurture, challenge and support I needed to grow in many different ways as a minister-

Michael Gladfelter earned the Master of Divinity degree. He will become pastor of a United Methodist Church near Portland, Ind.

ing person." Currently she and Jonathan Wenger, her husband, are completing an assignment with Mennonite Board of Missions as Service Adventure co-leaders. Wenger's parents are Ron and Kathy Ramer of North Lawrence, Ohio, and she is a member of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville.

Allan Yoder MDiv. Pastor of Good Shepherd Community Church, Adamstown, Pa. He and Rebeca Jimenez Yoder have three children. His parents are Henry and Mildred Yoder, of Peoria, Ariz.

Julia Zacharias MATS in Biblical Studies. Will continue at AMBS as a teaching assistant in Hebrew. "It has been important to me to learn to read biblical texts and make decisions about them with integrity." Julia is a member of Reinland Evangelical Mennonite Church, Reinland, Man. Her parents are Ed and Susan Zacharias, presently of Chihuahua State, Mexico.

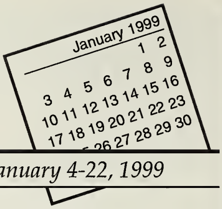
Melanie Zuercher MDiv. Will continue as News Service editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church. "At AMBS I discovered the joys of mining the many facets of biblical texts, and of deeply spiritual worship." Melanie is a member of Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., and attends Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan. Her parents are Joyce and Bill Zuercher of Hesston, Kan.

Sherri Martin, 1998 graduate from Floradale, Ont., celebrates with her father, Allan Martin. Sherri will become a Service Adventure unit leader in South Bend, Ind., with Mennonite Board of Missions.

Left to right: Everett Thomas, Jeni Hiett Umble, Tonya Ramer Wenger, Allan Yoder, Julia Zacharias, Melanie Zuercher

1998 graduate Tonya Ramer Wenger gets help with her hat and hood from her husband, Jonathan Wenger (behind her) and members of the Service Adventure Unit she and Jonathan have been leading in Champaign, Ill. Jonathan is a 1996 AMBS graduate.

January at AMBS



Interterm *January 4-22, 1999*

Dynamics of Church Planting and Growth
Art McPhee. AMBS
War and Peace in the Bible
Ben C. Ollenburger, AMBS
Anabaptist History and Theology
Karl Koop, AMBS
Peace and Justice: Latin American Perspective
Mario Higueros, Dean, SEMILLA (Latin-America Anabaptist Seminary, Guatemala). Course meets in Guatemala
Fostering Faith in the Family *(January 4-8)*
Rosemary Widmer, member of pastoral team of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.
Marriage, Family and Pastoral Care *(January 11-22)*
John and Naomi Lederach, previously senior clinicians at Philhaven Hospital
Revelation to John *(January 11-22)*
Nelson Kraybill, AMBS

For more information, contact Randall C. Miller, admissions, admissions@ambs.edu

Pastors' Week *January 25-28, 1999*

Facing our Fears — Finding a Future

Presenters:
Leonard I. Sweet, Ph.D., professor of Postmodern Chrisitanity at Drew University, Madison, J.H., dean of Drew University Theological School
Anne Stuckey, M.Div., minister of congregational leadership with Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, preaching minister at Salem Mennonite Church, Waldron, Mich.
Worship team members:
Les and Gwen Gustafson-Zook, Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., and Alex Naula, Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind.

For more information, contact Diane Zaerr, Pastors' Week coordinator, dzaerr@ambs.edu

Leadership Clinics *January 29, 1999*

Enhancing Bible Study with Computer
Perry B. Yoder, AMBS
Beyond Kool-Aid and Talking Vegetables (Summer Bible School)
Rosemary Widmer, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.; Rose Mary Stutzman, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa.
Training Congregational Members in Relational Evangelism
Art McPhee, AMBS

For more information, contact Diane Zaerr, Pastors' Week coordinator, dzaerr@ambs.edu

AMBS Panorama

Student receives award

Krista Erickson, AMBS student in the Peace Studies program, received one of three national achievement awards given in March by the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic organization. The award, given to three outstanding students who are blind or visually impaired, recognizes their scholastic achievements.

New adjunct faculty appointed

AMBS has appointed new adjunct faculty members who teach one or two courses each year, often in the summer or January interterm. The appointments and their fields of instruction are:
Alan Kreider, Church History and Evangelism;
Mario Higueros, Peace, Justice and Biblical Interpretation (Latin America);
Eleanor Kreider, Worship and Mission;
Ruth Lesher, Religious and Psychological Assessment;
Marvin E. Grooms, Methodist Pastoral Ministry.

On-line courses

This fall, AMBS will offer two courses on-line: **Reading the Bible,** a beginning level Bible course tailored for on-line participation and flexible for learning at an individual pace. Instructors: Jacob W. Elias and Perry B. Yoder.

Rethinking Mennonite History, an opportunity to "rethink" Mennonite history, reviewing recent interpretations on specific topics and examining some nontraditional sources such as the arts. Instructor: Walter W. Sawatsky.

Erick Sawatzky receives degree

Erick Sawatzky, associate professor of pastoral ministry and director of field education at AMBS, received a Master of Theology degree this spring from Calvin Theological Seminary. His major research project involved discovering what Mennonites think about pastoral care and how pastoral care is carried out in congregations. His thesis is titled, "Extending the Boundary: Pastoral Care of the Mennonite Congregation." Erick already holds M.Div. and D.Min. degrees.

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

Editor and designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos: Page 1 and graduate groups by Steve Echols; other photos pp. 3-7 by Mary E. Klassen

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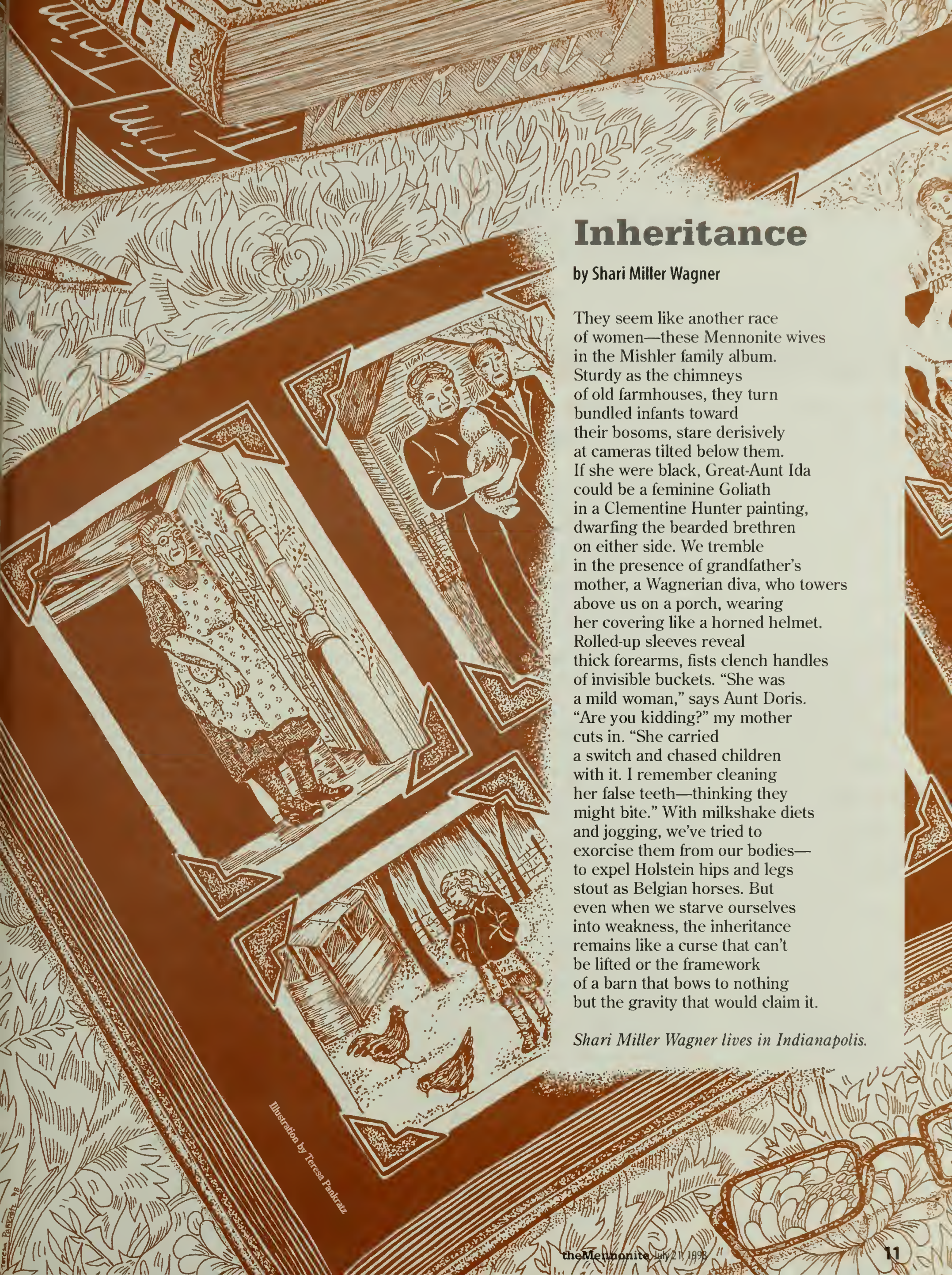


Illustration by Teresa Pankratz

Inheritance

by Shari Miller Wagner

They seem like another race
of women—these Mennonite wives
in the Mishler family album.
Sturdy as the chimneys
of old farmhouses, they turn
bundled infants toward
their bosoms, stare derisively
at cameras tilted below them.
If she were black, Great-Aunt Ida
could be a feminine Goliath
in a Clementine Hunter painting,
dwarfing the bearded brethren
on either side. We tremble
in the presence of grandfather's
mother, a Wagnerian diva, who towers
above us on a porch, wearing
her covering like a horned helmet.
Rolled-up sleeves reveal
thick forearms, fists clench handles
of invisible buckets. "She was
a mild woman," says Aunt Doris.
"Are you kidding?" my mother
cuts in. "She carried
a switch and chased children
with it. I remember cleaning
her false teeth—thinking they
might bite." With milkshake diets
and jogging, we've tried to
exorcise them from our bodies—
to expel Holstein hips and legs
stout as Belgian horses. But
even when we starve ourselves
into weakness, the inheritance
remains like a curse that can't
be lifted or the framework
of a barn that bows to nothing
but the gravity that would claim it.

Shari Miller Wagner lives in Indianapolis.

Like entering God's house: The author canoeing on the Boundary Waters in 1996.

Wilderness lessons

by Larry Penner

Every small act, from preparing food to using the bathroom (or accommodating the lack thereof), required effort and taught me lessons about my misconceptions of time, priorities and my place in my environment.

To the sick the doctors wisely recommend a change of air and scenery.—Thoreau in *Walden*

When several college friends and I planned a reunion canoe trip in northern Minnesota several years ago, I had no idea I would return to the Boundary Waters annually or that summer vacations would take on spiritual significance. I expected to enjoy the beauty of God's creation, but the world I found was so different from home that the experience was more like a cross-cultural encounter.

In the years since, I have learned more about God and my place in God's creation with each return trip to the wilderness.

My first trips into the Boundary Waters, a network of thousands of lakes in wilderness set aside for canoe travel only, were like entering another culture. I had little wilderness-living experience, and I was in a world I did not understand. The things I took for granted—meals, a soft bed, shelter—took planning and effort. Distances I would measure in minutes in my car took days in a canoe. Every small act, from preparing food to using the bathroom (or accommodating the lack thereof), required effort and taught me lessons about my misconceptions of time, priorities and my place in my environment.

The irony, of course, was that this foreign, awkward lifestyle was more natural than the artificial ways of living that had become second nature to me over the years. We live with this irony every day. We spend our lives in an artificial, human-constructed environment of office buildings and housing developments. Where I live in Lancaster, Pa., paved streets, manicured lawns and mini-marts have become so much the norm that an isolated plot of park or farmland can seem unnatural, as if someone intentionally inserted a bit of nature into the otherwise natural order of concrete.

When we find ourselves for the first time in undisturbed wilderness—in the world as God created it—we feel disoriented. Unless we are within reach of some safety blanket—a telephone or car—anxiety accompanies the overwhelming beauty of the place. The natural world is completely unnatural to us. On the first day into a canoe trip I am reminded how far my daily life is from the immediacy of God's presence I feel in the wilderness. The wilds remind me that God, after all, did create this world. Entering the undisturbed wilderness is like entering God's house.

Humility: One of the first spiritual lessons the wilderness teaches is humility. Our human-made environments nurture our false sense that we control our lives. I can't start out on a trail without accepting my weakness and my dependence on God. Once the first lake is crossed, the social position I have created for myself at home, with all if its attendant control and security, is gone. Civilized society gives us a distorted, self-important view of ourselves that we cannot perceive until we leave it. In the wilderness I am not defined by memberships, affiliations or career. At the same time I am surrounded by a world that does not revolve around humans—I am a small part of the balance of life.

Another reminder of humility is the sense of my place in the lifetime of the woods. At home I am hard pressed to find elements of my environment that are more than perhaps 100 years old. In the North Woods (the vast forest of which the Boundary Waters are a part), campers sleep on the granite roots of mountains that stood hundreds of millions of years ago. About 12,000 years ago (give or take a millenium) glaciers carved the lakes that allow canoes to navigate the wilderness. The oldest trees in the Boundary Waters are over 400 years old, and pictographs left scattered through the park by Native cultures likely predate these.

As I enter this grand-scale timeline, hours and minutes lose their significance. In the woods I feel a small step closer to experiencing God's time. For the duration of any trip, there will be no appointments to keep, no clock metering my activities. Wilderness Wind, the Mennonite outfitter that has given me and many other Mennonites our first experience of canoe travel and wilderness living, insists that campers leave their watches behind. While the requirement strikes some campers as ridiculous (I've even seen it make some outright hostile), I have been on trips where first-time campers said giving up the watch was one of the most significant parts of their trip. Sunrise, sunset and the rumblings of your stomach regulate the day. Living without a clock shows us how artificial our dependence on it is and takes us closer to understanding a God that does not measure time in hours and minutes, a God for whom 1,000 years is as a day.

Culture shock: Just as the wilderness refocuses my sense of time, it resets my understanding of necessities. Development workers often return from overseas and talk about culture shock readjusting to the luxuries of North American life. Returning from the woods has the same effect. Fitting all necessities for living a week or more—including food and shelter—into one backpack can be a spiritual discipline. Campers learn to redefine what is really necessary to live. The physical exertion of a day's paddling make simple meals of dried fruits, peanut butter and jelly and fresh lake water more satisfying than a dinner at an expensive restaurant. The woods teach gratefulness for what God has given rather than the constant dissatisfaction I've learned to feel at home.

Gratitude: Lysianne Unruh (left) and Bonita Suter, friends of the author, prepare a pancake breakfast in summer 1997.

Larry Penner

These lessons in simplicity have made me keenly aware of an increasingly pervasive, ironic twist to the relationship between consumerism and the simplicity of living outdoors. The wilderness has become a selling tool. Outdoor companies market their fashions as if they were selling a wilderness experience—as if purchasing a Polartec jacket could bring you closer to the kind of spiritual experience the woods offers. The skyrocketing sales of sport utility vehicles and environmental license plates (as if you are saving the environment by driving your car) symbolize to me both the pervasiveness of the commercialism virus and the spiritual desire our country has for the simplicity the wilderness offers. If only we could learn that our consumerism is exactly what stands in our way.

The skyrocketing sales of sport utility vehicles and environmental license plates (as if you are saving the environment by driving your car) symbolize to me both the pervasiveness of the commercialism virus and the spiritual desire our country has for the simplicity the wilderness offers.

Another gift of renewal the wilderness gives is the redefinition of work and play. A wilderness trip erases the artificial distinction between the two. In the woods, tasks like crossing a lake, building a fire or preparing a meal become pleasures. Vacation is not an escape from responsibility but a lesson in taking pleasure in responsibility. The dangers of a canoe trip, from a bear threatening your food to a thunderhead approaching as you cross a lake, require heightened responsibility. But with the responsibility comes freedom as canoers experience independence and the ability to become truly self-reliant. Satisfaction comes as one's ability to care for oneself in the woods grows—as one becomes more at home in God's house.

There is no end to the spiritual lessons of the outdoors. And with each trip I learn more. As I watch a beaver or chipmunk, I wonder whether God watches me this way, taking delight in the beauty of my life while I go about my daily tasks. Rounding a bend to find a moose grazing is a gift, as if God has stepped into my path. The silence of a lakeside morning can be a form of prayer, when every smell, sight, sound and touch seems full of God's presence. In stepping out of my domesticated world into a world raw with God's handiwork, I find a more honest understanding of self and of creation. It is a work I hope to continue throughout my life.

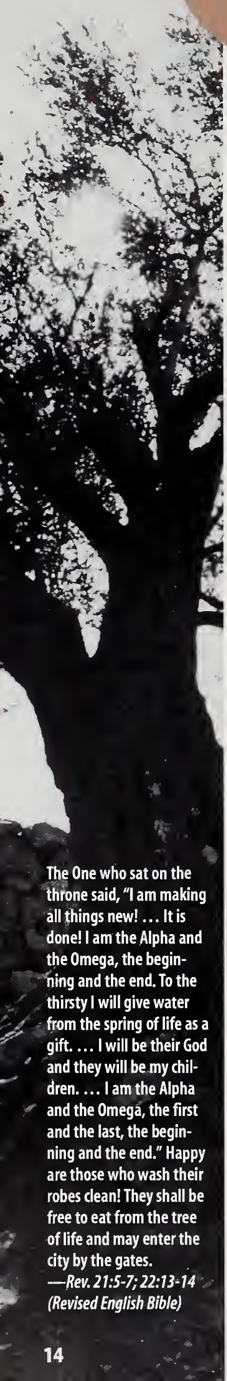
Larry Penner lives in Lancaster, Pa.

Wilderness Wind seeks to offer opportunities in wilderness camping within the context of Christian values and theology. Further, it seeks to teach through experience the integration of Christian spirituality, care for the environment, wilderness travel and safety, wilderness ethics, outdoor education and peace and justice concerns. With its base camp near Ely, Minn., Wilderness Wind offers wilderness experiences for individuals or groups, regardless of skill level or experience. It is in operation from mid-May through mid-September. For more information, contact Wilderness Wind, 511 W. 11th, Newton, KS 67114, 316-283-5132.

Beginnings
a tM series

Making all things new

by Willard E. Roth



The One who sat on the throne said, "I am making all things new! … It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water from the spring of life as a gift. … I will be their God and they will be my children. … I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Happy are those who wash their robes clean! They shall be free to eat from the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.
—*Rev. 21:5-7; 22:13-14 (Revised English Bible)*

Chad, who lives with ataxia and a seizure disorder that requires a wheelchair, listened to God's Word in the first verses of Genesis and the final verses of Revelation. Then, lying on his stomach in his home studio, which he has named God's Eye Art, Chad took brush and pigment and painted *The Tree of Life*. With brilliant orange and deep yellow he stroked overarching light. With bold blue he streaked the river of life flowing from God's throne down the middle of the street of the Holy City. With orchard green he positioned trees on both sides of the stream, each tree bearing fruit of many colors. With creative power, Chad's art invites the viewer to enter the Holy City and eat freely.

On Ireland's north coast, the Corrymeela Community builds bridges of Christian love across age-old factions dividing the body of Christ. Corrymeela has named its worship center the Croi (Gaelic for "heart"). Hanging in the Croi is Elizabeth Andrewes' *The Tree of Life*, a visual reminder that all races, creeds and nationalities working together can create something beautiful.

Like Chad's painting, Elizabeth's cloth mural was inspired by the last chapter of the Bible. Each of its 400 leaves and 12 fruits were embroidered by a different person—women, children and men from all six continents. Most of those who crafted have never been to Corrymeela but shared in the project through varying connections. The artistic offerings were sewn onto the fabric, bearing witness that the leaves of the tree of life "are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2).

The tree has been a common spiritual sign through the ages of human history. In the 13th century, Bonaventure described a tree with 12 branches laden with leaves, flowers and fruit. "This is the fruit," he wrote, "that took its origin from the Virgin's womb and reached its savory maturity on the tree of the cross under the midday heat of the Eternal Sun, that is the love of Christ. In the garden of heavenly paradise—God's Table—this fruit is served to those who desire it."

Like a patchwork quilt, the Bible's last chapters set forth a maze of images as the old order passes and something new emerges. Several of the images come in sevens: seven angels, seven bowls, seven plagues. More come, like Dunkin Donuts, by the dozen: 12 angels, 12 tribes, 12 foundation stones, 12 apostles, 12 pearls.

John's description is vivid and sensory: I saw a new heaven and a new earth. I saw the Holy City. I heard a loud voice. I saw no temple, for its temple was the sovereign Lord God. I saw the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal. It was I, John, who heard and saw these things.

John prostrated himself to worship the angel who had shown him around. But the messenger made clear, "It is God you must worship." Once more came the bold witness: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Happy are those who wash their robes clean. They shall be free to eat from the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.

This witness sounded long before in the scriptural scroll. "See, I am creating new heavens and a new earth! … I am creating Jerusalem as a delight and her people as a joy; … My people will build houses and live in them, plant vineyards and eat their fruit; … they will be as long-lived as a tree" (Isaiah 65:17-22).

Heaven is a slippery word. Ideas about heaven seem as numerous as the stars in the skies. Heaven is shorthand; we debate the translation. Most obvious and least controversial is naming the space overarching earth the heavens. After this basic definition, Webster's 10th edition adds these: the dwelling place of the deity and joyful abode of the blessed dead; a spiritual state of everlasting communion with God; a place of utmost happiness.

The metaphor abounds in the Scriptures as well as in our own *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. The book's index (1992) counts 227 appearances of "heaven" (140), "heavens" (28) and "heavenly" (59). Beginning with, "In thy holy place we bow, perfumes sweet to heaven rise" (# 2) and on to the last song, "Praise him above ye heavenly host" (# 658).

Those who follow Jesus, Paul contends in Philippians 3, are citizens of heaven and from heaven expect their deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ. The second-century writer of the Epistle to Diognetus said, "Christians inhabit the lands of their birth but as temporary residents thereof. They pass their days upon earth, but they hold citizenship in heaven."

What, then, dare we affirm with certainty concerning heaven?

Heaven is the place of God's dwelling: When Jesus replied to the request of his disciples, "Teach us to pray," he began, "Our Father in heaven." While he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day on the island of Patmos, John foretasted heaven. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth. … I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God," witnessed John. "I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; … See, I am making all things new.' And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God and a radiance like a rare jewel" (Revelation 21:1-5,10-11).

Worship connects earth with heaven. The colorful images of the last book of the Bible picture heaven as a fantastic worship festival. People will bring into the city the glory and honor of the nations (21:26). The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and God's servants will worship God (22:3). In prayerful, joyous worship we are involved in heaven's life. Both creating and expressing community, Christian worship offers hints of heavenly transformation, especially at those critical moments like birth, baptism, marriage, death.

Heaven is the presence of God with the people of God: Jesus continued his response to the disciples on how to pray, with the petition, "God, your will be done on earth as it already is being done in heaven." The emphasis is not our going to but Christ's coming from heaven. The posture of God's people is not escape from earth's pain and problems, but participation with God in regeneration of God's entire creation. God's desire is that heaven connects spiritual vitality with earthly needs.

Church connects earth with heaven. Church is the people of God, the body of Christ, the community of the Spirit. The home of God's people is with God in heaven come to earth. Heaven is to be with God, to be blessed by God, to bask in God's gracious goodness. Goodness is not from heritage or holiness but in trusting God's amazing grace.

Heaven is the participation of God's people in God's agenda: Paul underscored heaven's reality in his second letter to the young church in Corinth by accenting the call to mission. "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17-20a).

Mission connects earth with heaven. The Holy City gathers together the whole people of God for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2). The whole people of God come from across the generations in the old covenant of the 12 tribes—symbolized by 12 city gates—and the new covenant of the 12 apostles—symbolized by 12 foundation stones (21:12-14). The Holy City is where healing happens, where God's agenda dominates. That, too, is our invitation as a new people coming together from two traditions rich in mission history: "God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world" (from "Vision: Healing and Hope").

Heaven: God's people will see that God's intention is to portray heaven in childlike simplicity. Storyteller Cornelia Lehn puts it thus: "Heaven is so beautiful that it is hard to describe. Jesus said it is like a city sparkling like a diamond. A river flows from the throne of God right through the middle of the street of the city. The tree of life grows on both sides of the river and it has 12 kinds of fruit on it. But the most wonderful thing of all is that we will see God" (*God Keeps His Promise*, 1970).

The posture of God's people is not escape from earth's pain and problems, but participation with God in regeneration of God's entire creation. God's desire is that heaven connects spiritual vitality with earthly needs.

Heaven's essence is that God and God's people are together. As Marcus J. Borg (*Meeting Jesus Again*) reminds us, the Christian life ultimately is neither about believing nor about being good but "about a relationship with God that involves us in a journey of transformation," a transformation beyond imagination, and heaven is our destination.

As a new, integrated Mennonite faith family, we declare in our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*: "We look forward to the coming of a new heaven and a new earth, and a new Jerusalem, where the people of God will no longer hunger, thirst or cry but will sing praises: 'To the One seated on the throne and the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever! Amen!' "

Willard E. Roth, Elkhart, Ind, has served the church as editor, pastor and communicator.

Beginnings is a series of occasional articles that reflect on selected biblical passages where the word "beginning" occurs.

On Friday mornings the Iona Community in Scotland, with participants dispersed around the globe, prays this prayer:

"The love and affection of the angels be with you,
The love and affection of the saints be with you,
The love and affection of heaven be with you …
To lead you and to cherish you this day."

Judge: Christian Scientist not evil

A preacher at Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church did not imply in a sermon that a Christian Scientist woman was evil, a judge has ruled. As a result, the woman cannot bring a defamation lawsuit.

Maryfrances Cassell, a Christian Scientist, had been a partner with Mount Joy member Arlene Miller in a music studio. After the relationship ended, Ervin Stutzman gave a sermon reflecting on the relationship. He read the account of the serpent in Genesis 3 and the story of the prodigal son.

Cassell claimed Stutzman was calling her the serpent and that Miller was the prodigal returning from under evil influence. Stutzman said his sermon was about the Mount Joy pastoral team's interactions with Miller and her family.

The judge ruled, "Reading the transcript of the church service as a whole, the court find's that [Cassell's] interpretation is not justified." ***—Pennsylvania Law Weekly***

Mennonite Media to take ministry to Internet

HARRISONBURG, Va.—In addition to videos, newspaper columns and radio and TV public-service announcements, Mennonite Media will now be taking its ministry to the Internet. The Mennonite Board of Missions board of directors last month authorized its media department to develop a ministry-driven web site.

Board member Michael Chandler supported the decision but expressed concerns about the individualistic nature of the Internet. "I would affirm a strong and clear message regarding the centrality of the gathered community," he said.

Virgo Handojo, another board member, noted the potential of a presence on the information superhighway. The congregation he pastors, Jemaat Kristen Indonesia Anugrah in Pasadena, Calif., has its own web site where it has raised awareness of persecuted Christians in Indonesia. "We even planted a church in Australia with a pastor we became acquainted with through email," Handojo said.—*MBM News Service*

Tour leader, church administrator dies

MOUNT PLEASANT, Pa.—Arnold Cressman, co-founder of a tour company emphasizing Mennonite history, died July 8 at the age of 69. Cressman, Rhoda, his wife, and Barbara and Jan Gleysteen created TourMagination in 1970, and the Cressmans led tours until 1993.

From 1961 to 1971, Cressman was field secretary for the Mennonite Commission for Christian Education, a predecessor to Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. He also served as executive director of Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Mount Pleasant, Pa., and on the Mennonite Publication Board. Cressman served pastorates in Ontario and was on the committee which oversaw the reorganization of the Mennonite Church in 1971.

Hesston names pastoral ministries director

HESSTON, Kan.—Palmer Becker has been appointed director of Hesston College's pastoral ministries program, starting in January.

Becker is currently pastor of Calvary Mennonite Church, Aurora, Ore. He has also pastored congregations in Oklahoma, Minnesota and British Columbia. Becker has served in Taiwan with the General Conference Mennonite Church's Board of Christian Service and is a former executive secretary of the Commission on Home Ministries.

He has a master's degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and a doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

EMU sets contributions record

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite University received a record $4.26 million in gifts during the 1997-98 fiscal year, shattering the old mark of $3.67 million, set last year. Contributions rose 16 percent over 1996-97.

Most of the increase came from restricted gifts, which go to projects such as buildings and endowments. According to unaudited figures, EMU received $3.12 million for restricted projects, up 21 percent over last year. Undesignated gifts totaled $1.14 million, an increase of 9 percent.

Manitoba bike tour raises funds for Iraqi project

WINNIPEG—About 100 people cycled through southern Manitoba last month, raising $31,000 (U.S.) for a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) project to treat children in Iraq with leukemia.

Without the drugs, the children will probably die. But with the drugs, more than 80 percent will live. The cost of the two-year treatment program is $2,100 (U.S.) per child.

A father and son alone raised $6,000 (U.S).

The bike tour was underwritten by a local family whose son died of leukemia four years ago at age 14. "Because of their generosity and the dedication of the volunteers, all the money raised in pledges will go towards the Iraq project," says MCC staff member Kathy Fast.

Camping association adopts vision statement

WINNIPEG—The Mennonite Camping Association adopted a vision statement at its biennial meeting this spring at Camp Arnes near Winnipeg. The statement emphasizes the organization's intent to "provide leadership to our camp and church communities on a journey of transformation through seeking God's face in creation, receiving God's love in Christ and radiating God's Spirit in the world."

"The purpose [of the statement] is to inspire as well as inform, giving opportunity to look at the past and build for the future," says Mary Jane Eby, past association president.

Events

Mountville (Pa.) Mennonite Church centennial celebration, Aug. 1-2.

Lancaster Conference Mennonite Women Fall Fellowship, Sept. 19, Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church. Theme: "Stories, the Flavor of Life." Keynote speaker: Eve MacMaster. Contact: Rozanne Zimmerman, 717-859-2350, or Carolyn Weaver, 717-859-1310.

Youth Leaders Convocation event for youth workers, Sept. 26-27, Irwin, Ohio. Sponsored by Rosedale Bible Institute and Conservative Mennonite Conference. Contact: Sharon Wingert, Rosedale Bible Institute, 614-857-1311, rosedalebible@juno.com.

Workers

Dalellew, Tesfatsion, of Seattle is beginning a three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Akron as co-director for MCC Africa programs.

Jantzi, Rhoda and Scott, of Harrisonburg, Va., are beginning three-year MCC terms in Guatemala as country representatives.

Wenger, Thomas M., of Lancaster, Pa., is beginning a two-year MCC term in Bangladesh as country representative.

Births

Bontrager, Shawn David, June 24, to Greg and Melody (Wiens) Bontrager, North Newton, Kan.

Bradley, Rayna Alexis, June 17, to Roddrick Bradley and Megan Martin, Gainesville, Fla.

Byler, Derek Robert, June 16, to Juanita (Plank) and Steve Byler, Belleville, Pa.

Diaz, Brisa Isabel, May 14, to Ana (Zorilla) and Carlos Diaz, Ephrata, Pa.

Friesen, William Grant, May 19, to Karen (Warren) and Kim Friesen, Springdale, Ark.

Hazbun, Marie-Claire Loewen, June 21, to Tamara (Loewen) and Tony Hazbun, South Bend, Ind.

Jantz, Cristina Janelle, June 12, to Jeff and Teresa (Hertzler) Jantz, Elkhart, Ind.

King, Hannah Elizabeth, June 18, to Lynnette King, South Bend, Ind.

Krabill, Rebecca Wynne, June 25, to Bonnie (McMichael) and Keith Krabill, East Amherst, N.Y.

Lowe, Stephen Curtis, June 13, to Cyndee (Showalter) and Tony Lowe, Linville, Va.

Miller, Gabriel Stoltzfus, May 5, to Becky (Stoltzfus) and Kevin Miller, Baltimore, Md.

Miller, Sheyenne Lynn, April 17, to Dallas and Sharri (Yoder) Miller, Sarasota, Fla.

Mullet, Theodore Lamar, May 6, to Darlene (Gerber) and Mel Mullet, Sarasota, Fla.

Nissley, Madilyn Ruth, May 27, to Darin and Ramona (Shetler) Nissley, Canton, Ohio.

Oostland, Ryan Daniel, May 8, to Audrey (Mast) and Jan Oostland, Sarasota, Fla.

Rondo, Isabel Kay, June 20, to Donya (Handrich) and Thomas Rondo, Goshen, Ind.

Shank-Zehr, Abigail Irene, May 27, to Kirk and Kristin Shank-Zehr, Harrisonburg, Va.

Sorensen, Elijah Allan, April 9, to Julie (Johnson) and Evan Sorensen, Pasadena, Calif.

Stoltzfus, Iris Elizabeth, June 22, to Rebecca (Shenk) and Ryan Roberts, Harrisonburg, Va.

Sutter, Hannah Christine, May 4, to Jenny (Bruaw) and Aaron Sutter, West Palm Beach, Fla.

Widmer, Allison Skye, June 18, to Kim (Kluber) and Monte Widmer, Wayland, Iowa.

Wilson, Brock Michael, June 24, to Kate (Roth) and Mike Wilson, Wayland, Iowa.

Wittmer, Andrea Danielle, May 11, to Beth (Jantzi) and Merlin Wittmer, Sarasota, Fla.

Wright, Jacob William, June 23, to Jennifer (Wenger) and Jimmy Wright, Weyers Cave, Va.

Marriages

Atkinson/Kautz: Larry Atkinson, Summerville, S.C. and Heidi Kautz, Millersville, Pa., June 20, by Timothy Martin.

Bender/Ours: Sheila Bender, Wellman, Iowa, and Jeremy Ours, Harrisonburg, Va., June 13, by Steve Yoder.

Benner/Fleming: Edgar Benner, Tiskilwa, Ill., and Beverly Ann Fleming, Tiskilwa, June 6, by Calvin Zehr.

Birkey/Horning: Lori Birkey, Hopedale, Ill., and Josh Horning, Ephrata, Pa., June 20, by James Smith and Glenn Hoover.

Question #18:

"How many of them are there?"

20Q For the answer, visit "20Q," our new imaginative museum at The People's Place. Based on the "20 Most Asked Questions About the Amish and Mennonites."

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Boester/Selig: Arthur Boester, Fort Wayne, Ind., and Phyllis Selig, Fort Wayne, June 13, by Douglas Zehr.

Boller/Copeland: Wilma Boller, Kalona, Iowa, and Carroll Copeland, June 20.

Byler/Byler: Janine Byler, Normal, Ill., and Jason Byler, Slatington, Pa., June 27, by Timothy Schrag and Sher Byler.

Byler/Kauffman: Eugene Byler, Allensville, Pa., and Holly Kauffman, Belleville, Pa., June 13, by Max Zook and Ivan Yoder.

Clemmer/Rodes: Julia Clemmer, Middlebury, Ind., and Owen Rodes, New Paris, Ind., June 20, by Robert Shreiner.

Crofoot/Willems: Megan Jean Crofoot, Castorland, N.Y., and Jerod Hank Willems, Logansport, Ind., June 13, by Lester Bauman.

Dayton/Yoder: Jeffrey Scott Dayton, Champaign, Ill., and Laura Dionne Yoder, Arthur, Ill, June 27, by Phil Schrock.

Diener/Eastman: Daniel Andrés Diener, Dallas,Texas, and Deborah Lynn Eastman, Dallas, June 6, by David Whiteman.

Driewer/Gross: Scott Driewer, Hampton, Neb., and Brenda Gross, Henderson, Neb., June 27, by Loren Cooper.

Estes/Serpette: Tim Estes, Dale City, Va., and Pam Serpette, Bloomington, Ill., June 13, by Steve Estes and Timothy Schrag.

Friesen/Koehn: Amber Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Chris Koehn, Hesston, Kan., June 13, by Weldon Martens.

Friesen/Smith: Leeann Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Adam Smith, Sargent, Neb., June 27, by Weldon Martens.

Glick/Yoder: Laura Glick, Harrisonburg, Va., and Edward Yoder, Sarasota, Fla., June 6, by Duane Yoder.

Harris/Longacre: Maggie Harris, Harleysville, Pa., and Kyle Longacre, Barto, Pa., June 27, by James Longacre and Truman Brunk Jr.

Hershberger/Kauffman: Ross Hershberger, Bourbonnais, Ill., and Melika Kauffman, Kankakee, Ill., June 20, by Timothy Schrag.

Hoover/Mathew: Laura Hoover, Goshen, Ind., and Josh Mathew, Goshen, June 6, by Duane Beck and Phil Mininger.

Hostetler/Miller: David Lee Hostetler, Dundee, Ohio, and Tara Marie Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio, May 16, by Ross Miller.

Nofziger/Schlabach: Bruce Nofziger, Goshen, Ind., and Patty Schlabach, Goshen, June 20, by Brenda Meyer.

Rowe/Sawatzky: Damian Rowe, Newton, Kan., and Marla Sawatzky, Newton, June 13, by Pearl Hoover.

Schlabach/Shoup: Randall Eric Schlabach, Mount Eaton, Ohio, and Kirsten Linae Shoup, Dundee, Ohio, June 6, by Ross Miller.

Deaths

King, Ruth Mae Gerber, 90, Morton, Ill., died June 7. Survivors: husband, Roy; daughter, Ruthie Roth. Burial: June 11 at Tremont, Ill., by Doane Brubaker and Chris Wright.

Krehbiel, Kenneth Weldon, 75, Deer Creek, Okla., died June 14 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Irma; children Carla Gifford, Steven, Rickie, Daryl, Lintha Niles; 13 grandchildren. Burial: June 18 at Ponca City, Okla., by Leon Grider and Norman Unruh.

Miller, Lyle, 46, North English, Iowa, died April 9. Survivors: wife, Liz; children Lisa, Les, Lori. Burial: April 11 at Wellman, Iowa, by Mike Klassen.

Regier, Anne O. Krehbiel, 84, Moundridge, Kan., died June 15. Survivors: stepson, Loren; two stepgrandchildren; five step-great-grandchildren. Burial: June 18 at Inman, Kan., by Dean Linsenmeyer.

Riegsecker, Edward, 69, Archbold, Ohio, died June 13. Survivors: wife, Lueen; children Alan, Sandra Aeschliman, Rita Rupp, Beverly Bonilla; 12 grandchildren. Burial: June 16, Pettisville, Ohio, by Wayne Pipkin and Charles Gautsche.

Schwartz, Emma, 97, Pretty Prairie, Kan., died May 24. Burial: May 27 at Pretty Prairie by Elmer Wall.

Stoltzfus, Lydia, 91, Morgantown, Pa., died June 11. Survivors: son, Harvey; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: June 13 at Morgantown, Pa., by Nathan Stoltzfus and Glenn Leaman.

Stutzman, Marlin, 66, Wellman, Iowa, died April 23. Survivors: wife, Glennis; children David, Kathy, Pam, Julie, Tony. Burial: April 25 at Wellman by Mike Klassen.

Classifieds

Juniata Mennonite School has openings for a ***1st-grade teacher*** and a ***3rd-grade teacher*** for the coming school year. Interested applicants should call Andrew Meiser at 717-463-2898 or 717-463-9448.

Bethel Mennonite Church, rural Inman, Kan., seeks a ***pastor.*** Average Sunday attendance is about 240. Candidates should submit resume, letter of interest or inquiries to Chris Weaver, search committee chair, 348 Arrowhead Road, Inman, KS 67546; 316-585-6907.

Kraybill Mennonite Elementary School, Mount Joy, Pa., is accepting applications for part-time teacher in middle school for ***home economics, health classes,*** with option for some counselor responsibilities.

Contact John Weber, administrator, 598 Kraybill Church Rd., Mount Joy, PA 17552; or call 717-653-5236 for more information and an application.

Niagara United Mennonite Church is looking for ***leading pastor***, to work with ministerial team in a 600-member congregation, commencing 1999 (start date negotiable).

Send resume or call for information: Search Committee, Niagara United Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 1258, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0; 905-468-3313; fax 905-468-4754.

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church seeks ***part-time music director,*** beginning Sept. 1, 1998. The music director leads senior and children's choirs, directs congregational singing, develops vocal and instrumental ensembles for use in worship, and serves on the worship committee.

Send resumes to Marlene Kruger Wiebe, 57 Stirling Avenue North, Kitchener, ON N2H 3G4; 519-576-0859; email timmar@golden.net.

New Danville Mennonite School, an accredited K-8 school located in Lancaster, Pa., has an immediate opening for an ***administrator.*** Applications are welcomed from qualified individuals who have a commitment to Anabaptist values and Christian education.

Contact Gary Yoder, 1028 Frances Ave., Lancaster, PA 17601; 717-394-5239 (evening) or 717-581-6100 ext. 128 (daytime); email BY1028@aol.com.

No Longer Alone Ministries, providing ministry to the mentally ill, families and congregations of Lancaster, Pa., area, seeks ***executive director.*** Supported living program, family support group, education and possible housing options. Must have experience with long-term mental illness, understanding of community mental health services, collaborative leadership skills, experience in contacting donors, desire to facilitate church ministry to this population.

Information: Ken Nissley, 717-653-2550; email: knissley@redrose.net.

Mennonite Indemnity, Inc. (MII): ***management position.*** MII of Akron, Pa., is a reinsurance and general agency participant with property mutual aid service providers across the country. This person will direct and manage the operations of the Anabaptist and Brethren Agency, an MII subsidiary, and participate as a member of the MII/ABA management team. Insurance company or agency experience required.

Send resume to MII, Attn. Lloyd Kuhns, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; or call 888-685-7600.

Highland Retreat is seeking a half-time ***office assistant.*** The camp is located 28 miles NW of Harrisonburg, Va. This year-round job will begin mid-August or as soon as possible thereafter. Tasks include taking reservations, general clerical work, serving as office receptionist and other related tasks.

For more information, contact Lee or Peg Martin at 14783 Upper Highland Dr., Bergton, VA 22811; 540-852-3226.

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by Omar Eby

To strive with God

Awake, my God who hast ordered that justice be done.—Psalm 7:6b

How shall we understand people of God who declaim, "Rouse thyself, O Lord, in wrath against my foes"? Are they full of faith, confident and just? Or just arrogant and egocentric? How can they be sure that their foes are God's foes? And this voice: "My God, wake up, you're the one who has ordered that justice be done." How can such people know fully that their actions are just to demand that divine justice follows? How can they be sure they're not just miffed at their competitors and in their heated pique overreact by calling for divine retribution?

Job said, "My thoughts today are resentful, for God's hand is heavy on me … (for) God himself never brings a charge against me" (23:1) and, "I swear by God who has denied me justice, and by the Almighty, who has filled me with bitterness" (27:1). And Jacob said, "I will not let you go until you bless me. What is your name?" (Genesis 32:26, 27).

To Job, God replied, "Stand up and brace yourself like a man … how dare you!" Yet this also: "The Lord blessed the end of Job's life more than the beginning" (42:12). And to Jacob, the Divine Wrestler said, "You are now Israel because you strove with God" (Genesis 32:28). "Israel," of course, means "God-strove," and Jacob called the place "Face-of-God."

So in the God-Place one may be a God-striver, a God-wrestler? Since I am where God has led or placed me, I have the human right to strive with God that justice be done for me? and for my people? I am breathless.

O Lord, who saves men and women of honest heart, I will praise thee for thy justice. Amen.

The wide meadows of God

Let us take possession of the pasturelands of God.—Psalm 83:12

The farm boy in me, the agrarian romantic, the seeker after a rural shalom—these persona are flushed with a great longing by the phrase "pasturelands of God." I see the broad green valleys through which quiet streams creep, pastureland for sheep and cattle, antelope and bison—of the Midwest, of Israel, of Russia, of East Africa. Pastureland for the wildlife of God, for the tame beasts of humankind. My eye feasts on such sweeps of land, as I have seen them in travel.

Yet this morning I think of those broad savannas of God's spiritual kingdom. Here God invites us to stake out territories of living, claiming for the Lord space in which people may come and pitch tents, graze and receive nourishment for their souls. Family, students, colleagues. Myself as a shepherd who has entered God's pasturelands to know God's "shekinnah," God's shalom, and join my family and friends and students to settle and explore these spiritual savannas of God's kingdom—to know the beneficent light of God's Son on the quiet landscape of the heart, to let the feverish whimpers of the flesh and professional rivalries die, and to know peace, gain spiritual poise, worship.

I look at the meadows behind my house rising to orchards, to woods. I possess those meadows, even though the Burkholders pay taxes on them, when I gaze on them from my deck, when I stroll through them in the evening. They speak of continuity, of rhythms, of community (soil, grasses, wildlife, insects). Similarly, in the quiet times I descend with my mind into my heart and there possess the wide meadows of God.

O God, your pasturelands need rain this July. Send, too, showers on the meadowlands of my spirit—blighted again by failure. Amen.

Omar Eby teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

I see the broad green valleys through which quiet streams creep, pastureland for sheep and cattle, antelope and bison—of the Midwest, of Israel, of Russia, of East Africa. Pastureland for the wildlife of God, for the tame beasts of humankind. My eye feasts on such sweeps of land.

Faith resources:

Mission of Mercy: Holy Week in Baghdad (11-minute video, free rental, additional copies $5 each) is available from Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515, 800-297-1516. The video comes with a study guide prepared by the Middle East Department of CWS that details the work of the church in Iraq, the effect of U.N. sanctions and questions for discussion.

Daniel: Under the Siege of the Divine by Daniel Berrigan (Plough, 1998, $17) is a poetic journey through the Book of Daniel loaded with spiritual, social and political charges. To order, call 800-521-8011.

Financial Meltdown in the Mainline? by Loren B. Mead (The Alban Institute, 1998, $17.85) calls congregations to direct attention to their dwindling financial resources and their unreliable fiscal practices.

Grace and Truth in the Secular Age, edited by Timothy Bradshaw (Eerdmans, 1998, $28), is a collection of essays written by an international group of leading Anglican pastors, missionaries and scholars that reflects on issues to be debated at the Lambeth Conference, a worldwide meeting of Anglican bishops that takes place every decade.

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J. Lorne Peachey

That we may be one (2)

Since it's highly unlikely we'll reach consensus

One doesn't have to be an astute observer of the church to conclude we followers of Jesus are a most motley group with diverse beliefs on any subject. As I noted in last week's editorial, a current passionate disagreement surrounding integration has to do with who will belong to the new Mennonite Church. Will anyone now a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) or the current Mennonite Church (MC) automatically belong? Or will a list of beliefs be drawn up to which one must subscribe to be a member?

The question is emotional because of congregations that have been asked to leave an MC area conference since they accept noncelibate homosexuals as members (see page 6). Three of these continue as GC members. What will be their status in the new denomination?

Regardless of the answer, not everyone will be happy. Feelings run high on this question. Nor is it likely the two sides will agree any time soon. So now what? How do we keep from becoming stalemated and move on?

The first thing we must do is pray. This is the first step we Christians must always take when we face difficult issues. Prayer can do miraculous things, especially for the one praying.

Majority and minority—those are not words we like to hear in the church. We can be more comfortable with them if we realize both have a role to fill in the body of believers.

Sometimes through prayer we change our opinions and our beliefs. More times we come to deal with our feelings and emotions surrounding those beliefs. It is through prayer that we also come to terms with our attitudes and actions toward those who take a position different from ours.

But we can't just pray; we must also act. Because, as Anabaptist-Mennonites, one of our strong beliefs is that the Spirit can speak through us all, any decision we make will come on the basis of what the most members believe to be the will of God.

That means we will have a majority decision, to which there will be minority dissent. Majority and minority—those are not words we like to hear in the church. But is there any other way? Perhaps we can be more comfortable with them if we realize both have a role to fill in the body of believers.

The role of the majority is to act on the decision it believes to be God's will. It does so humbly, not using "winning" language, always aware that the majority can be wrong. It continues to listen to the minority voice, knowing the Spirit is at work here, too.

The role of the minority is to recognize it is a minority and not keep the church from action. It will do so humbly, not using "losing" language, aware that the majority can sometimes be right. The minority will not threaten to leave because its way is not followed but will, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, do all it can to support the church.

An example of a constructive minority voice in our time is that of North Central Conference in the current Mennonite Church. This conference voted against integration because it believed the church had more to lose than to gain through merger. It also dissented on the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* because its views on women in leadership were different from that of the confession (see page 5).

But North Central is not threatening to leave. It is very much involved in the integration discussions. Next month North Central is meeting with Northern District (GC) and Iowa-Nebraska (MC) conferences to explore a possible joint future in the new integrated church. North Central joins the discussion because the church has made a decision and, though they are a minority voice, they want to continue to be part of this church.

I believe Jesus would applaud that position and that attitude. They can only lead to the unity for which he prayed long and fervently. Four times he asked God to make us one (John 17:11, 21, 22, 23).

Whatever side we are on for any issue, we do well to heed that prayer. A lot is at stake. Not the least of which is our witness to the world in which we will live—as a new, integrated Mennonite Church.—*jlp*

[illegible]

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The grace of a free lunch

The editorial "There Is Such a Thing as a Free Lunch!" (July 7) describes our fear that we will take advantage of God's free gift of grace by not taking sin seriously. As I read Romans 6-7, that same fear was present in the early church, and I recognize it in my own heart.

Can it be otherwise? We yearn for God's acceptance but resist the truth that God's acceptance and forgiveness are indivisible. And as soon as this matter of forgiveness is raised, we are in the rough water. For who but the church can teach us that we are sinners in need of forgiveness?

That isn't to say we should put criteria around God's grace. But neither should we regard the church's seriousness about sin as a sign that it has failed to grasp the grandeur of the gift.—*Berry Friesen, Lancaster, Pa.*

"There Is Such a Thing as a Free Lunch!" was just what I needed. Combined with Phil Callaway's article, "Grace: So Freely Received, Yet So Little Practiced," God used *The Mennonite* to break through to me. As a pastor, I have recently been overwhelmed by how evil people can be and had concluded that a sermon on "right living" should set everyone straight. I still think that is appropriate, but now I will surround it with the message of God's grace. Thanks again for allowing the Lord to use you in this ministry.—*Nelson Shenk, Boyertown, Pa.*

Confusion and culture

The use of the word "myth" as synonymous with "story" leaves unanswered the confusion this brings to the reader ("Myths to Live By," June 23). While there is much symbolism in the New Testament, it is also evident that much of the material is to be taken in a literal sense.

True, people live by myths, as J. Denny Weaver ("The Mythical Society," June 23) points out in saying that many U.S. citizens see America as being a predestined, elect people with a unique, God-given destiny. But Weaver's point is that this myth is not actually the truth from God. While this myth has power to shape the lives of those who hold it to be true, that doesn't keep others of us from saying that the reality is that the kingdom of Christ is not from this world (John 18:36) and meaning this literally.

To move from this reference to myth and speak of Jesus going to the cross, exposing and overcoming the system ruled by Satan, how do we say, "This story is the main myth we are to live by" without leaving the question as to whether it is actually and literally true or just a legend that influences us?—*Myron S. Augsburger, Harrisonburg, Va.*

"Myths to Live By" exposed how easily the myths of our surrounding system choke our ability to grow in God's kingdom. Living in another culture for a year helped me see some of those myths. While *The Mennonite* clearly focuses on military violence, it is strangely silent about vehicular violence. Most readers have lost loved ones to the social myth that we must rush from place to place in an automobile frenzy. As people who live in a different system, it is time for the church to model change in the way we drive (Matthew 6:32-34). —*Kevin Weaver, Chongqing, China*

Other difficult decisions

To those among us who still feel the need to call for expulsion of congregations or removal of ministerial credentials ("Dealing with Difficult Decisions," July 7) allow me to say: Come now, let's be reasonable, let's be fair and let's not be self-righteous. If the love of Christ is controlling us, we will be working hard to find ways to include rather than exclude those who differ with us. I applaud Marlene Kropf's suggestion, at least as a starter, that we "create a category for relationships with dissenting congregations or conferences" (Readers Say, May 19).

The New Testament lists of behaviors and attitudes that do not belong among us are pretty long: adultery, greed, drunkenness, idolatry, jealousy, envy, the gossips, the heartless, the ruthless and more. Imagine what taking a literalistic, legalistic disciplinary approach to all these sins would mean. Our sickle of judgment would cut a mighty swath. If I may be a little facetious, this could take more people out of our midst than the rapture.—*Charles Shenk, Columbus, Ohio*

Difficult decisions—which ones? If furor is the measurement, homosexuality is one of the most difficult issues of all. If the Bible is the measurement, there are other candidates, such as militarism and materialism. Another difficulty is prejudice; Mennonite Central Committee's summer drama troupe powerfully portrays oppression and superiority, documenting that prejudice is sin. Would Pacific Northwest Conference take on these three

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

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s say readers say

issues with as much vigor as homosexuality? And would pastors Monty Ledford and John Slivkoff be as adamant on these three as tests for conference membership and ministerial credentials? If sin be sin, let's not sin in omitting such big ones.—*LeRoy Kennel, Schaumburg, Ill.*

Another division?

At the Women Doing Theology Conference which I attended ("The Dignity of Doing Theology," July 7), presenter Lois Barrett asked us to write experiences that have caused wounds. I wrote several from my past: experiencing the abuse of power by a man; being asked if I type when I questioned why a man with fewer professional credentials than me received the church institution job I had applied for; and having my ideas and opinions accepted more when voiced by men than by me.

I guess my newest wound was too fresh for me to consciously recall on that first night of the conference. But it is one of the same pattern. I had queried two of the Meetinghouse editors for the job of reporting on the conference. The male editors, however, gave the job to one of their own.

I was supportive of the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church. I value my seminary and voluntary service friends from the other denomination and wanted to be together to do church. So far, though, I'm disappointed. In consolidating two magazines into *The Mennonite,* we lost the editorial voices of two excellent women writers. In restructuring the new denomination, we stand to lose the Canadian voices in U.S. conferences and assemblies. We also divide over inclusion issues. Will we draw more dividing lines between women and men as well?—*Name witheld by request*

Cover photo by Synapses

Dying congregation relocates, revives

Move counters nationwide trend of losing members

LAUREL, Md.—A recent study shows that 80 percent of U.S. congregations have memberships which have plateaued or are declining. Four years ago, Cottage City Mennonite Church was one of those congregations.

But the story since then offers hope for other congregations facing declining size.

Cottage City, the oldest congregation in the Washington-Baltimore District of Lancaster Conference, was organized in the 1920s when a handful of Mennonites moved to Washington. But it had dwindled to about 50 people as families moved out of the area and no one replaced them. The congregation was dying.

Dave Eshleman became Cottage City's pastor in 1994 and soon proposed three possible responses to the congregation's situation: keep things as they had been, make radical changes or move to another location to make a new start.

Members unanimously chose to move, and in the summer of 1995, the congregation relocated to the Washington suburb of Laurel, Md., 10 miles away. Now known as Capital Christian Fellowship, it has an average attendance of 120 to 130 people.

While the move has been rewarding, Eshleman warned his congregation that it wouldn't be easy. "I told people … they would have to be willing to make the second most difficult decision of their lives—to make radical changes, especially in worship," he says.

The congregation began using a full worship team and band instead of a single chorister. Members began meeting in small groups. And they reached out to their neighbors, including African-Americans and others of non-ethnic Mennonite backgrounds.

Before the move, Eshleman says, "some people never invited their neighbors. Some people in the area had never heard of the church."

One man within walking distance of the old Cottage City building didn't come until the congregation moved to Laurel. Now he's a faithful attender. "We have more people coming from Cottage City area now than when we were located there," Eshleman says.

Almost every Sunday, visitors find their way to the wooded campus of Capitol College, where the congregation meets in an auditorium. "It's unusual not to have visitors," says Helen Eshleman, Dave's wife. "When I invite people, I tell them, 'I won't know everyone either.'

"Encouragement is my gift. I love to encourage people. Every person I meet, I always think, 'They are a potential Christian.' "

The Eshlemans, who have planted churches in Ohio and Florida in both rural and urban settings, quickly discovered that nurture happens best in weekly small groups and that Sunday morning sermons needed to be focused on those who don't know Christ.

"The person on the street needs to understand it," Dave says.

They also discovered that the transition from Sunday morning corporate worship to the intimate setting of someone's living room for a weekly small group is too large a leap for some new believers. So the Eshlemans are developing classes and seminars which create a transitional environment. Some happen on Sunday morning, others on a week night. One such transition event is a marriage enrichment seminar led by the Eshelman's son, Chet Miller-Eshleman, and Holly, his wife. Chet is Capital's associate pastor.

"Maybe it goes without saying, but it's primarily the new people who bring other new people," Chet says. "One of the highlights for us as we go into this fall is Friends Sunday. It's a boost not only for reaching the unchurched but also an encouragement for a small church like us."

Some years, as many as 180 to 200 people have shown up that Sunday.

One woman who owns a beauty salon received in the mail a flyer for Capital Christian Fellowship and visited the church one Sunday. She and Helen quickly developed a friendship, and Helen began going to her salon to get her hair done and to encourage her. Now the woman invites her clients to come to church with her.

That is part of the effort required to build and maintain a growing, vibrant congregation. "You don't have to die if you're willing to pay the price," Dave says. "Ask the Lord, 'How can you use me to reach people.' "

But Helen emphasizes that the results are not up to them. "You work like crazy," she says, "but it's in God's hands."—*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

You work like crazy, but it's in God's hands.

—Helen Eshleman

Book reviewer reaches millenium

To say that Earl R. Delp is an avid reader is an understatement.

In an informal ceremony June 26 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg, Va., Delp was honored for reviewing 1,000 books for Choice Books. Delp actually reached 1,000 last August with *A Mother's Grief Observed* by Rebecca Baker. He has since read 100 more books.

Delp, a retired pastor and cabinetmaker, started reviewing for Choice Books in 1963. "The Scriptures are the standard for everything I read," he says.

CMC signs off on two-country church model, encourages dialogue on homosexuality issues

STRATFORD, Ont.—In anticipation of new life in an integrated Mennonite Church, Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) delegates have signed their own death certificate.

Delegates to the CMC's 96th annual sessions July 8-12 in Stratford, Ont., overwhelmingly adopted a resolution supporting the one-denomination, two-country model for the new church to be formed by the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC). The resolution, passed with a 97 percent affirmative vote, authorizes the CMC General Board to begin work at the "transformation" of the conference into the the Canadian body of the new church.

Related discussion included encouragement from delegates to maintain strong binational structures and programs such as overseas mission work and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Specific recommendations are to be brought to next summer's CMC sessions, which delegates decided to hold in St. Louis in conjunction with the joint GC-MC convention July 23-27.

But the decision to meet in St. Louis was not made enthusiastically. Voting by a show of hands, the proposal passed by only a narrow margin because of concerns about cost and accessibility. CMC moderator Ron Sawatsky called the reservations "valid and serious" but noted the need for Canadians to meet with the rest of the North American church.

"We're in a difficult situation," he said.

Another difficult situation for CMC was homosexuality in the wake of South Calgary Inter-Mennonite Fellowship last fall joining the Supportive Congregations Network's "publicly affirming" category, meaning it openly accepts homosexual members. CMC received a number of letters objecting to continuing the congregation's conference membership. At least one congregation called for a resolution to expel South Calgary from the conference.

"In response to a resolution asking for exclusion, we feel the CMC is not there yet," Sawatsky said. "Homosexuality and related issues, such as church membership, have not come before the CMC before in its nearly 100-year history of annual assemblies. ... We haven't had the dialogue or the conversation on this yet. That needs to happen first."

By a 93 percent vote, delegates passed a resolution containing a strong call for dialogue while reaffirming the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and the "Resolution on Human Sexuality" passed by GC delegates in 1986 and MC delegates in 1987.

GCMC photo by Melanie Zuercher

Delmar and Elsie Epp (left), pastors of East Zorra Mennonite Church in Tavistock, Ont., present gifts to S. Roy Kaufman, pastor of Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church in Laird, Sask., during the Conference of Mennonites in Canada annual sessions July 8-12. The two congregations last year became the first to participate in a CMC twinning project, designed to build bridges between Ontario and western Canada congregations, two groups which don't know much about each other. About 30 congregations have joined the project.

CMC officials initially denied SCN, Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns and the Parent Support Group of Ontario booth space, seminar time and a meeting room at the Stratford sessions. The groups set up a table at the parking lot's main gate. They were later allowed to have a dinner meeting inside the facilities.

In time allotted for discussion on the homosexuality resolution, Lynn Dyckman of Waterloo, Ont., told of sitting at the gate with the three groups. "I'm a white, North American woman with a lot of education, and I don't think I'll ever see those who are excluded from privilege in the same way again," she said. "Jesus never spoke about homosexuality, not one word. He spoke a lot about wealth. I've never seen a church ask the rich to sit outside the gate."

But Henry Neufeld of Plum Coulee, Man., said: "You've crafted a very well worded resolution. But my concern is what are we supporting. What direction are we going? Are we headed toward becoming a 'publicly affirming' denomination? Are we following God's way? What we are doing is encouraging people to live in sin—and we will be held accountable."—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

> **Homosexuality [has] not come before the CMC before. ... We haven't had the dialogue or the conversation on this yet.**
>
> —*Ron Sawatsky*

Correction: Ida Mae Murdock was the first full-time Hopi teacher at Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz., not Jane Polingyouma as reported in the June 23 issue of *The Mennonite*.

MCC: Iraqi sanctions 'morally bankrupt'

If a million people have died because of sanctions, there is something morally wrong with it.

—Bob Herr

WINNIPEG—The United Nations sanctions against Iraq "present a moral dilemma to peace-loving Christians" and should be loosened if not discontinued altogether because of the suffering they are causing, according to a document adopted by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive committee.

"Disarmament in the Persian Gulf is a legitimate and worthy policy goal, but to do this at the cost of a million sanctions-related deaths, including half a million children, indicates a policy that is morally bankrupt," says the statement, which was approved by the executive committee on June 19.

Broad economic sanctions imposed against Iraq by the U.N. Security Council have resulted in an estimated 1 million deaths in that country during the 7 1/2 years the sanctions have been in place.

Some committee members questioned the use of a potentially inflammatory phrase such as "morally bankrupt." But those words were carefully chosen, says Bob Herr, co-director of the MCC Peace Office, whose staff helped compose the statement. "If a million people have died because of sanctions, there is something morally wrong with it," he says.

The statement says: "Moral responsibility for the plight of these innocent people rests not only with the Iraqi government but also with the U.N. Security Council. Regardless of Iraqi actions, the international community shares in the responsibility.

"MCC believes that adjusting or discontinuing U.N. sanctions will improve the plight of Iraqi people and that the international community bears a moral responsibility to do so."

MCC photo by Ken From

Mennonite Central Committee East Coast regional director Ken Sensenig (left to right), George Richert of the MCC Canada executive committee and Khaled Al-Sudani, director of Islamic Relief for the Middle East, unload donated medicines in Baghdad, Iraq. Sensenig and Richert visited the country in March as part of an MCC delegation.

The document will be used primarily to advocate against the sanctions and can be shared with government officials and the media to explain MCC's position on Iraq. The statement will be of particular importance to staff in MCC's Washington, Ottawa and U.N. offices.

"We are assisting all our advocacy offices to focus on the same ideas," Herr says. "We are giving a perspective that is accurate from what we have learned via being in Iraq and being in close touch with the people there."

MCC in 1996 signed a letter opposing sanctions against Iran and Libya.—*Rick Fast of MCC News Service*

Letter calls for improved relations with Iran

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office's letter calling for renewed ties with Iran was signed by 15 other church groups, including the American Friends Service Committee, Church of the Brethren, Evangelical Lutheran Church and Presbyterian Church USA.

WASHINGTON—Three years ago, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was a lone voice on Capitol Hill advocating for improved relations between the United States and Iran.

But in a June 22 letter to members of Congress, the MCC U.S. Washington Office was joined by 15 other church groups urging the United States to take advantage of a window of opportunity to renew relations with Iran nearly 20 years after the hostages were taken at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. The letter cites recent changes in Iran's rhetoric and actions which "call for a significant response from the United States."

"We believe it is time for the United States to reconsider its official policy of economic containment and severed relations," the letter states. "The wall of mistrust will not crumble overnight. But small steps are critical."

Specifically, the letter calls for increasing people-to-people exchanges, business activity and official dialogue with Iran.

There have been several recent signs of thawing in relations. In January, Iranian president Mohammad Khatami called for dialogue between the people of the two countries. In June, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called for a "road map leading to normal relations."—*J. Daryl Byler for MCC News Service*

Youth group members find God and their way through wilderness service assignment

LINCOLN CITY, Ore.—Driving more than 30 minutes uphill on a gravel road, the youth group members from Metamora (Ill.) Mennonite Church didn't know where they would end up or what sort of service opportunities would be found in the wilderness.

"I thought this place was going to be a dump because when we came up it was really dark and we couldn't see anything," says Sam Bonnell. "All I saw was this gravel road, and I said, 'Great, what am I getting myself into?' "

What the 13 youth and four sponsors got themselves into was a week of experiencing God in nature at Drift Creek, a Mennonite camp near Lincoln City, Ore. The group spent June 11-18 clearing hiking trails, painting cabins, cleaning and helping prepare meals for the rush of summer campers.

"I think [the youth group members] learned about God and God's creation," says Metamora youth sponsor Susan Surratt. "Being out here, it's so peaceful. They don't have to worry about any of the things they usually do."

Says Bonnell: "It's the most beautiful country I've ever seen. ... It's immense and beautiful. I love it."

As is the case for many Mennonite youth groups, Metamora takes a trip every year, alternating between the Mennonite Church youth convention and a weeklong service trip. Two years ago, the group served in Toronto, working in agencies and learning about urban living.

"In Toronto we worked more with people, and here we work with ourselves," says youth group member Brad Rogers. "The work's different, but it's all for the same purpose."

GCMC/MBM photo by Matt Kauffman Smith

Neil Hagen (left) and Andy Kraut of the Metamora (Ill.) Mennonite Church youth group, paint a cabin at Drift Creek Camp near Lincoln City, Ore. The youth group spent a week at the camp last month under the Group Venture short-term service program.

For each excursion, the Metamora youth group turned to Group Venture, a joint program of Mennonite Board of Missions and the Commission on Home Ministries offering short-term service assignments for high school-age youth at 30 to 40 sites in North America.

"They get a chance just to get away from the stuff of life, the busyness of life," says Ron Sears, who administers Drift Creek with Jeanne, his wife. "They're still busy, but there's no television, no radio, there's no phone where they're staying, and it's 35 to 40 minutes to McDonald's. So they get a chance to experience a different kind of place.

"It's a great place to be to experience God. You can allow God's Spirit to work in you and his voice can be heard."

The Metamora youth say they welcomed a break from remote controls and stereo systems. "I can do without that stuff," says Rachel Sutter. "But you never really know until you get away from it that you don't need it in your everyday lives."—*Matt Kauffman Smith for GCMC and MBM news services*

MCC Somalia work: peace through poetry

AKRON, Pa.—Ask about Somali news, and the answers won't be encouraging. War continues five years after U.S. military involvement there. Armed factions holding different parts of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, square off against each other, despite numerous accords.

But ask Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Bertha Beachy for news, and she will tell you about poetry.

In March, MCC supported a celebration of International Women's Day among refugee women from Mogadishu in Kenya. Among the events was a peace poetry contest. "Poetry is the most valued art form in Somali culture," says Beachy, who is based in Nairobi, Kenya. "The women use poetry to voice their united effort for peace in Somalia. Many also daily pray for the resolution of conflict."

MCC in the past year has provided $50,000 for Somali work, most of it for various women's peace conferences. Women are a key to peace in their society, Beachy says. They are often married into clans other than their own, so they may be in a position to help resolve conflicts between clans.

Alhough women may be publicly disregarded, they wield influence over men. "Men in the past have told me that they may go against the word of their father," Beachy says, "but never against the word of their mother."—*Ardell Stauffer for MCC News Service*

MCC

Bertha Beachy (right), a Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Missions worker among Somalis in Kenya, with Fatima Jibrell, a Somali relief worker.

by Al B. Fuertes

Hope in the midst of struggle

Our faith calls for a commitment to building peace founded on justice.

Gordon Houser

Al B. Fuertes

What do peace and justice mean for people struggling to bring life in the midst of death? The setting of this story is a barrio called Santo Niño in San Agustin, Surigao del Sur, Philippines, and a local congregation of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Santo Niño is a rural community in one of the heavily militarized areas in the northeastern part of the island of Mindanao. Around 97 percent of more than 300 church members are small-time farmers and fisherfolk. I lived and worked with this congregation for four years (1991-95).

In September 1992, military operations had been going on for months against the rebel New People's Army (NPA). Every day we heard cannon bombs and firearms, and helicopters hovered above us. Peasants and small-time farmers had been forced to evacuate their farmlands and other means of livelihood for fear of being hit by flying bullets or bombs.

Repeated military operations in this tiny area had resulted in the break-up of family and community life. The military had left houses burned, properties destroyed, crops unharvested, domesticated animals slaughtered, household belongings looted and children dying of disease and malnutrition. Nearly half of the civilian victims were children. But the military operation was a must, the government said, to get rid of the insurgents, to achieve peace.

In December 1992, the military conducted a census of every family. It became difficult for the townsfolk to offer shelter to strangers without approval from the military, lest they be labeled sympathizers of the NPA. Poor Filipino civilians in the mountains were forced to leave their land and means of livelihood to register in the barrio of Santo Niño as "transferees," or new residents, or else be labeled leftists. For months the military conducted a food blockade.

As pastor of the local United Church of Christ congregation, I knew how dangerous it was to do something in opposition to the government—not only for me but for the church and the rest of the residents. Taking an active role in healing the ills of society might mean the following:

- death for those advocates (in fact, I received a number of death threats),
- possible retaliation by the military through planted evidence,
- being disliked by the local government and other influential people in the community,
- being misunderstood by other denominations and conservative religious groups,
- adding pain to people already devastated materially, emotionally and psychologically.

Our response: The whole congregation felt it needed a strong foundation for whatever response to injustice it took, one biblically based and reflecting their faith in Christ. In small-group discussions and reflections about the situation, we shared our emotions and ideas. We analyzed the economic and political situation. We invited a few resource people, mostly from nongovernmental organizations, to provide information. Through this process, we experienced military harassment. The church and the parsonage were under surveillance for months. Military personnel in civilian uniforms pretended to join our church only to monitor what was going on during worship services.

Using our Sunday school classes and Bible study sessions, we realized we believed in the God of life. God manifested this image in many biblical events, from creation to Israel's liberation from Egypt, to the judges and the prophets, in the life and ministry of Jesus—God becoming human like us, giving life to all (John 10:10; Luke 4:18-19).

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) show that impoverishment and exploitation like what we were experiencing through massive militarization are contrary to God's will. Jesus meant to transform all forms of dehumanizing by announcing that the reign of God is for such oppressed people, not because they are good or better, but because they are taken advantage of and needy. The promise of God's reign is depicted in the images of the poor being satisfied, happy and comforted—a tangible

> The church and the parsonage were under surveillance for months. Military personnel in civilian uniforms pretended to join our church only to monitor what was going on during worship services.
>
> —*Al Fuertes*

Dan and Esther Epp-Tiessen

The promise of God's reign: Filipino children

manifestation of God's justice and love through us, the church, the community of those reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with Jesus' ministry.

We also realized that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, compels us to be peacemakers. Our vision was to be active participants in building a community where the quality of life is characterized by shalom: wholeness, well-being, growth, harmony, security, equality and the absence of war and conflict.

Poorest among the poor: Christmas came, but there was no shalom in our land. The killings continued. The sounds of firearms, cannons, the presence of the military and the names of all household members posted on every doorpost prevailed. As the church's Christmas gift to the community and as a concrete expression of our spirituality, we had a caroling program for the poorest among the poor, the internal refugees. We gave out rice, used clothing and other usable stuff, including toys (except war toys) in the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

We continued to welcome strangers who took refuge in our church. Never did I submit the congregation to the demands of the military. We were suspected of being a communist front.

We related to people in small ways, by being with them, listening to each other, sharing our resources and celebrating the season in simple yet meaningful, practical ways. We also prayed intensively, dialogued with military officials and government leaders, wrote petition letters and had signature campaigns to stop the military operation, and conducted marches and prayer rallies. Everybody was involved, from the smallest child who could walk to the oldest member of the church. This was a manifestation of our spirituality.

Our manifesto on peace and justice declared: "Genuine peace comes when justice is served, for as long as peasants remain landless, for as long as laborers do not receive just wages, for as long as we are politically and economically dominated by foreign countries, for as long as we channel more money to the military than to basic social services, for as long as the causes of social unrest remain untouched, there will be no peace."

Where love is concretely expressed, where resources are shared, where genuine relationship with one another is experienced, when we do what we believe to be right, even when it conflicts with the status quo, for the welfare of the whole community, God is there and life is real.

Our affirmation of faith demands the end of our indifference and silence. It calls for an unwavering commitment to the task of building peace founded on justice. As a people of God, we should identify threats to peace and human dignity in our national life. We should critically evaluate national and international policies and challenge them when they do not contribute to shalom. We need to work actively for understanding, reconciliation and unity, to join hands with people in the common quest for peace based on justice. Above all, we need to follow Jesus the Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Where love is concretely expressed, where resources are shared, where genuine relationship with one another is experienced, when we do what we believe to be right, even when it conflicts with the status quo, for the welfare of the whole community, God is there and life is real.

Al B. Fuertes graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in 1997 with a master of arts in peace studies. He lives in Dumaguete City, Philippines.

Risking peace

by Aimee Moiso and Bonnie Klassen

A Colombian shows his patriotism by refusing military service, despite the risks such a decision entails.

Andreiev Pinzón didn't start out an activist. He simply loved his country—Colombia—and its people. Because of that love, not even the pressure of the mandatory military service law in Colombia could persuade him to join the national army. The Colombian people consistently suffer under destructive military activity, he says. Fighting in the army would mean fighting against who he was as a Colombian.

When Andreiev, 20, enrolled in Peacemakers (Hacedores de Paz), the conscientious objection program of the Mennonite Church of Colombia, he gained more than just an alternative to military service. His patriotism grew into a passion for a better Colombia, which for him means a future without violence. Through Peacemakers, Andreiev became convinced that the only way to end violence in Colombia is to actively seek peaceful conflict resolution in the nonviolent pursuit of justice and respect for human rights.

"To be neutral in a context of violence is to be passive," Andreiev says. "We will escape the cycle of violence in Colombia only by taking an active stance. Through challenging the acceptance of violence by means of nonviolent civil disobedience, we hope to change the system little by little. In order to look toward a better future, we have to find new ways of resolving conflict without weapons."

Murder capital of the world

Colombia, with a population of 37 million, has the highest homicide rate per capita in the world. Human rights organizations report that an average of 100 people are assassinated daily as a result of the 50-year-old war between guerrilla groups, the national army and, more recently, the involvement of army-backed paramilitary death squads. One way guerrillas protest against corruption in the government is by blocking roads and killing citizens who come to vote on election day. In response, paramilitary groups often massacre or "disappear" civilians in their attempt to gain control over land that lies in the hands of guerrilla groups. A 1996 report from the fiscal department of the Colombian government said that more than 1,500 people have been "disappeared" in Colombia in the past 15 years. According to the human rights department of Mencoldes, a Colombian Mennonite development foundation, more than 1 million people in Colombia have become refugees in their homeland, forced off their land because of economic and political violence. These displaced people—more than 250,000 in 1997 alone—arrive in larger cities without resources, traumatized and hopeless. Human rights workers, indigenous group leaders, and refugees who try to defend their land are threatened and assassinated. The rural violence is perpetuated in urban areas through fear and frustration, and violence escalates outside the war zones.—*Aimee Moiso and Bonnie Klassen*

At the age of 18, all young men in Colombia are required by law to perform a year of military service in the national army. The recruiters are not selective; anyone of the right age and physical ability is a new cadet.

It is not uncommon for recruitment trucks to roll through poorer neighborhoods picking up young men and offering an alternative to unemployment. Those caught without their "libreta," the identification card proving completion of military service, are often "recruited" on the spot. Most Colombians follow this law without question, accepting it as the only option for their first year after high school.

Andreiev is one of 35 current participants in Peacemakers, a program that provides young men with an alternative to mandatory military service in Colombia. Peacemakers is supported by the Mennonite Church of Colombia through its peace and justice center, JustaPaz, and through the Mennonite Biblical Seminary of Colombia.

Based on the church's commitment to nonviolence, peace and opposition to injustice, the three-year-old Peacemakers program consists of courses in nonviolence, conflict transformation, church history and mission, ecology and social ethics, as well as community service work; its mission is not only to teach and advocate for conscientious objection but to build a knowledge about methods of nonviolent conflict transformation.

"We want to involve young people in activities that allow them to apply the theory of peace in a practical, real-life way: to exercise their right to conscientious objection in accordance with their convictions and beliefs," says Maricely Parada, coordinator of the Peacemakers program.

Life-changing realities: Andreiev knows firsthand the life-changing realities of the Peacemakers program. "The program not only changes lifestyles but [one's] entire way of being. You learn to respect others, control violence in the resolution of conflicts and live in harmony. You … see other people as a reflection of yourself and realize that all of us are human beings who deserve respect," he says.

In Colombia, however, nonviolent conflict resolution remains an ideal not practiced in real life (see box at left). "Desperation has become one of the strongest characteristics in our country, a country where those in power lack integrity and loyalty and where human rights go unrecognized," says Maricely.

Many young men finish their terms in the national army with no education beyond the science of killing. With no options in the poor neighborhoods of their youth, they often hire themselves out to paramilitary squads or join guerrilla groups. Domestic abuse, drug-related violence, and delinquency round out the picture, and Colombians are enveloped by an atmosphere of destruction.

"The violence between the government and the rebels," says Andreiev, "is not really a grassroots war. Rather, the war has been imposed on the people. But once these kids join the fighting, many of them take on the war as their own. Violence and armed conflict become part of the culture."

Second fiddle: Although the right to conscientious objection is implied in the 1991 Colombian constitution, constitutional "rights" have traditionally played second fiddle to concrete law in Colombia. The constitution states that "no one will be forced to act against his or her conscience," but because no specific law exists to back conscientious objection, the army simply contradicts those who claim the constitutional right.

The lack of definition in the constitution continues to plague Peacemakers on an institutional level as well. After completing the Peacemakers program, graduates are eligible to receive their libretas—which free them from further obligation to the military—having provided their obligatory year of "service" by way of their participation. But often the military is reluctant to give the libretas to the conscientious objectors, creating delays and extra requirements before the libretas are awarded. Some participants must continue in the program for more than a year, their uncertain status putting any future plans on hold.

"Young men are frustrated when they have to go time and time again to file civil rights claims for their right to conscientious objection and for their libretas," says Ricardo Esquivia, executive director of JustaPaz.

In December 1996, the seminary was confronted by another example of vague legal and constitutional interpretation. Through a local mayor's office, the National Police Office Against Terrorism and Impact Delinquency ordered the closure of the Mennonite seminary and the Peacemaker's program. The mandate stated that the seminary was not registered with the Ministry of Education and was therefore operating illegally.

But Colombia's constitution guarantees the right to religious freedom. Religious centers of education are not required to be registered with the Ministry of Education. With the help of international pressure, Colombian Mennonite leaders successfully defended their civil rights claims, and the Ministry of Education permitted the continuation of the seminary.

"The political intent against our church was so obvious that the conscientious objection program got more media coverage than we could have generated in a long while," says Peter Stucky, pastor of a Mennonite church in Bogotá. "It was an uneven fight from the start. All they had on their side was military, economic and political might. But we had the law, the truth and the cause of Jesus on ours."

Although the controversies surrounding Peacemakers made some people nervous about involving themselves in conscientious objection, the level of public sympathy for and awareness of the cause increased.

My grandfather was in the marines and he says [being a conscientious objector] is unpatriotic. I think the opposite. I think it's more patriotic to want something better than violence for my country.—*Andreiev Pinzón*

"Peacemakers has become more publicly known as yet another victim of the violation of fundamental rights by governmental entities," says Maricely. "This public opinion has generated support and solidarity from individuals and national and international organizations. As the understanding and security of conscientious objection increase, young people will become more and more interested in involving themselves with the program."

Backlash: But the problems for Peacemakers extend beyond institutional opposition. Participants have also received personal backlash for their involvement. For example, though Andreiev's mother approves of Peacemakers, not all of his family is so supportive.

"My grandfather and some other family members don't understand my choice," says Andreiev. "They think I'm crazy, that I'm only going against the grain for the sake of rebellion. My grandfather was in the marines and he says [being a conscientious objector] is unpatriotic. I think the opposite. It's more patriotic to want something better than violence for my country."

Like Andreiev's grandfather, some young men join the army whole-heartedly, believing that fighting against the guerrillas will bring peace and that it is the correct, patriotic response. Others are apathetic, without convictions leading them to seek alternatives. Still others are terrified of retaliation by the military, so they join the army out of fear.

"Many of my friends fear what might happen if they take this position of conscientious objection, so they take the easy way out and join the army," Andreiev says. "I am not afraid. I believe that what I'm doing is moral, ethical and responsible, and my convictions are stronger than my fears."

GCMC News Service

Andreiev Pinzón

Aimee Moiso is an intern with the Mennonite Church of Colombia. Bonnie Klassen is a mission worker in Colombia under a program jointly administered by the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church.

EMU grads make twin pro tryout

Among the hundreds of hopefuls who tried out for the new Washington Mystics women's professional basketball team were two spitting-image twins who are 1995 graduates of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va.

Teresa and Teresita Grant, who work for the same company, Xerox, and live together in Fredericksburg, Va., also played together on the same EMU team. The twins' attempt to make a professional team drew the attention of the *Washington Post*, which asked how they felt about their chances of making the team.

"I'm just giving it a run to see what happens," Teresita said.

Added her sister, "Ditto."

The Grants' similarities also included the same tryout result: Neither made the team.—*Crossroads*

MDS responds to one disaster after another

AKRON, Pa.—In the wake of 1998's unusual and unpredictable weather, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) in the last five months has started eight major project sites, six in the United States and two in Canada.

MDS volunteers are responding to flood damage in Warren, Minn., and in Manitoba. Tornado destruction has brought volunteers to Birmingham, Ala.; Waynesboro, Tenn.; Sanford, Fla.; Gainesville, Ga.; and Salisbury, Pa. MDS work has just finished in Alberta following destruction caused by prairie fires.

MDS is also considering responses to fires in Florida, flooding and tornadoes in Ohio, a tornado in South Dakota and straight-line winds in Iowa.—*MCC News Service*

Bethel College names three administrators

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College has filled three new administrative posts created as part of the school's five-year strategic plan. Shirley King will be dean of enrollment management, Bill Born will be associate dean for student development, and Dan Miller will be a development associate. All positions begin this summer.

King, a Bethel music professor since 1977, will direct student recruitment and retention. In addition to her music department responsibilities, she has served on the strategic planning task force, residence life task force and admissions and financial aid committee.

Born had been assistant director of admissions at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan. He is a Tabor graduate and has a master's degree in counseling and student personnel from Emporia (Kan.) State University.

Miller was an associate director of development at Hesston (Kan.) College. He is a graduate of McPherson (Kan.) College and has a master's degree in business administration from Friends University, Wichita, Kan.

MVS workers use their art to make a message

EVANSVILLE, Ind.—Most of the time, Mennonite Voluntary Service workers Matt Busby and Amy Rich do art with children in the poorest neighborhood of downtown Evansville, Ind. But in May, Busby and Rich placed their art into a global context. They joined about 45 other artists from around the country in a May exhibition reflecting the values of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, adopted by the 1993 Council of the Parliament of World Religions.

The declaration states that the solutions to poverty, genocide, child abuse and other ills are not found in more laws but in the human heart, which is created by God. The exhibition was held in a Catholic church in New Harmony, Ind. One of Busby's contributions was "body painting": He painted his face, arms and hands and pressed them onto newsprint. Rich collaborated on several mosaics and sculptures. Some of their students also had artwork on display.—*GCMC and MBM news services*

Clothing for Kosovo

Using an old tobacco baler at Mennonite Central Committee's material resources center in Ephrata, Pa., John Weaver compacts clothing in preparation for shipping. MCC sent 15 tons of used clothing to Albania, where more than 12,000 refugees from Serbia's Kosovo province have settled. The clothes are expected to arrive next month.

MCC photo by Tony Siemens

Events

Training event for "Good Ground" adult Sunday school curriculum, published by Faith & Life Press and Brethren Press, Aug. 29-30, Kansas City, Kan. Contact: Chris Scott, 316-283-5100, or Ken Hawkley, 614-766-0976.

Workers

Kenagy, Wilfred, was installed July 19 as minister of finance and facilities at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Births

Beachy, Allegra Annette, April 12, to John and Kathy (Sneary) Beachy, Kokomo, Ind.
Brunk, Isaac Allan, July 2, to Deb (Clemens) and Don Brunk, Souderton, Pa.
Conklin, Kaylee Sierra, June 22, to Brian and Dawn (Dobbins) Conklin, Ottsville, Pa.
Detweiler, Blake Nathaniel, June 22, to Diane (Halteman) and Phil Detweiler, Telford, Pa.
Dunmore, James Carolus, July 6, to Daniel and Elizabeth (Witmer) Dunmore, Gainesville, Fla.
Fiegly, Cole William, June 20, to Beverly (Miller) and Travis Fiegly, Akron, Ohio.
Hostetter, Brooke Lynn, June 19, to John and Judy Hostetter, Oxford, Pa.
Lake, Madalyn Rose, July 7, to Ben and Christina (Braden) Lake, Delavan, Ill.
Loving, Skye Renae, June 30, to Jeremy and Jodie (Miller) Loving, Lockridge, Iowa.
Rittenhouse, Emily Sue, July 4, to Jim and Kendra (Good) Rittenhouse, Green Lane, Pa.
Ruiz, Selena Angelica, June 24, to Angela and José Ruiz, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Sommers, Chase Camron, June 19, to Debbie (Sommers) and Wendell Sommers, Hartville, Ohio.
Wedel, Landon Jay, May 3, to Jay and Sharon (Ross) Wedel, Hesston, Kan.

Marriages

Alderfer/Chandler: Rebecca Alderfer, Sellersville, Pa., and Jeremy Chandler, Pennsburg, Pa., June 6, by Gerald Clemmer.
Cugino/Pugh: Greg Cugino and Amber Pugh, Akron, Pa., June 13, by Urbane Peachey.
Dunda/Moyer: Gary Dunda, Millersville, Pa., and Heather Moyer, Souderton, Pa., July 4, by Gerry Clemmer and David Greiser.
Fox/Weber: Kevin Fox, Perkasie Pa., and Tricia Weber, Langhorne, Pa., June 27, by David Greiser and Tom Wright.
Good/Trost: Crystal Good, Lititz, Pa., and Matthew Trost, West Liberty, Ohio, July 3, by Dennis Ernest.
Green/Janzen: Betzaida Green, El Dorado, Kan., and Curtis Janzen, El Dorado, June 20, by Scott Miller.
Large/Rothery: Bert Large, Wichita, Kan., and Amy Rothery, Wichita, July 3, by John Baize.
Johnson/Miller: Rachel Renee Johnson, New Philadelphia, Ohio, and Randy Lee Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio, June 20, by Ross Miller.

Deaths

Baumgartner, Ruth Allgyer, 100, West Liberty, Ohio, died June 29. Survivors: children Joanne Near, Nancy Dodson, Carolyn Bashore; nine grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Burial: June 30 at West Liberty by George Bashore.
Beck, Floyd, 80, Stryker, Ohio, died June 21. Survivors: wife, Elsie; children James, Donald, Gregory, Judy Humes; 14 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Burial: June 25 at Stryker, by Mark Miller, Walter Stuckey and Wendy Miller.
Beiler, David, 63, Grantsville, Md., died June 25. Survivors: wife, Mabel; children John, Mary Heiser, Lamar, Charles; parents, Jonas and Mary Beiler; eight grandchildren. Burial: June 29 at Springs, Pa., by Alan Kauffman and Ken Zehr.
Brunk, Willard E., 93, Hesston, Kan., died June 25. Survivors: children Royce, Louise Zimmerman, Ronald; eight grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: June 27 at Inman, Kan., by Mary Dyck, Cheryl Hershberger and Ann Showalter.
Burnett, Janet, 91, died June 10. Burial: June 15 at Oley, Pa., by Karl Glick.
Clemmer, Anna Hange Hoffman, 87, Quakertown, Pa., died July 7. Survivors: children Phyllis Schlosser, Donald Hoffman; stepsons Earl, Erwin Jr., Rodney, Robert; four grandchildren; five stepgrandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; three stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: July 13 at Whitemarsh, Pa., by David Greiser and Gerald Clemmer.
Cooprider, Clara Showalter, 97, Hesston, Kan., died June 28. Survivors: children James, Joyce Cook; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: July 1 at Windom, Kan., by Mary Dyck and Cheryl Hershberger.
Detwiler, Verna Miller, 79, Hesston, Kan., died June 26. Survivors: husband, Ralph; children Sheldon, Phyllis Yoder, Glenford, Belle Duerksen, Luann Goertzen, Don; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: June 30 at Hesston by Mary Dyck, Cheryl Hershberger and Ann Showalter.
Letourneau, Albert, 47, Bridgewater Corners, Vt., died June 30 of cirrhosis of the liver. Burial: July 3 at Hartland, Vt., by James Musser.
Martens, Bertha Janzen Gaeddert, 97, Inman, Kan. died July 2. Survivors: stepchildren Nick, John, Wilbur, Hilda Froese, Marie Regehr; 30 stepgrandchildren, 45 stepgreat-grandchildren, four stepgreat-great-grandchildren. Burial: July 2 at Inman by Frank Keller and Dave Roth.
Moyer, Frank, 79, Perkasie, Pa., died June 27. Survivors: wife, Sara; children Charles, Lamar, James, Richard, David; 16 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 1 at Hatfield, Pa., by Michael Meneses, Hubert Schwartzentruber and George Hampshire.
Mullet, Melvin, 80, Berlin, Ohio, died June 28. Survivors: wife, Ruth; children Merle, Lois Menuez, Wade, Art, Peggy Pedigo; 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 2 at Berlin by Ernest Hershberger.
Oswald, Mary Stutzman, 78, Denver, died April 13 of cancer. Survivors: children Steve, Ben, Mike; eight grandchildren. Burial: April 16 at Denver by Vernon Rempel.
Richard, Pauline Marie Hylton, 83, Aberdeen, Idaho, died May 30. Survivors: children Margaret Wahlen, Ralph; three grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: June 3 at Aberdeen by Monty Ledford.
Saunders, Bill, 89, Wilkesville, Ohio, died May 24. Survivors: wife, Dorothy; children Mary Midkiff, Danny, Lanny; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: May 27 at Vinton, Ohio, by Jim Mullett.
Schertz, Lavina, 96, Eureka, Ill., died June 24. Survivors: daughter, Lola Ulrich; three grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Burial: June 27 at Roanoke, Ill., by Robert Nolt.
Sommers, Albert, 90, Kokomo, Ind., died June 25. Survivors: children Donna Hensler, Glen, Max, Dana, Norman; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Burial: June 29 at Kokomo by Lee Miller.
Wortman, Ruth Saner, 85, Belleville, Pa., died June 21. Survivors: stepchildren Donna Gilmore, Roberta Furst, Nellie, James; eight stepgrandchildren; five stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: June 24 at Mifflintown, Pa., by Gerald Peachey, Elam Glick and Andrew Stoner.

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Yoder, Elizabeth Nadine Yoder, 85, Goshen, Ind., died June 6. Survivors: husband, Daniel; children Freda Martin, Esther Bontrager, Nadine Brewster, Omer, Andrew, Merle; 14 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; eight stepgreat-grandchildren; two stepgreat-great-grandchildren. Burial: June 10 at Goshen by Greg Yantzi and Ron Kennel.

Yordy, Delmar Allen, 72, Gridley, Ill., died June 19 in a car accident. Survivors: wife, Esther; children Gary, Mark, Amy Shanks; seven grandchildren. Burial: June 23 at Gridley by Lester Zook.

Correction: In the June 23 listing of Deaths, Ralph Francois was omitted as a surviving son of Manette Louis.

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Classifieds

Lancaster Mennonite High School: Part-time ***dorm advisers*** for girls and boys needed—includes benefits. Call 717-299-0436.

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., seeks a full-time ***housekeeping director*** beginning on or before Sept. 1. Responsible for cleaning buildings and other related tasks. Compensation includes salary, housing, utilities and medical insurance.

For further information, call Christopher Gill, executive director, at 616-476-9744.

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church seeks part-time ***music director,*** beginning Sept. 1, 1998. The music director leads senior and children's choirs, directs congregational singing, develops vocal and instrumental ensembles for use in worship, and serves on the worship committee.

Send resumes to Marlene Kruger Wiebe, 57 Stirling Avenue North, Kitchener, ON N2H 3G4; 519-576-0859; email timmar@golden.net.

Shalom Ministries seeks ***counselor.*** Individual with independent license in social work, counseling or psychology is sought to work with Mennonite pastors, congregation members and others in the community in northwest Ohio. Willingness to work within the context of the church in a paradigm of wholeness and healing required. Responsibilities include consultation, education and therapy.

Interested individuals contact James Burkett, Box 188, West Liberty, OH 43357; 937-465-0010.

Mennonite Indemnity, Inc. (MII): ***management position.*** MII of Akron, Pa., is a reinsurance and general agency participant with property mutual aid service providers across the country. This person will direct and manage the operations of the Anabaptist and Brethren Agency, an MII subsidiary, and participate as a member of the MII/ABA management team. Insurance company or agency experience required.

Send resume to MII, Attn. Lloyd Kuhns, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; or call 888-685-7600.

No Longer Alone Ministries, providing ministry to the mentally ill, families and congregations of Lancaster, Pa., area, seeks ***executive director.*** Supported living program, family support group, education and possible housing options. Must have experience with long-term mental illness, understanding of community mental health services, collaborative leadership skills, experience in contacting donors, desire to facilitate church ministry to this population.

Information: Ken Nissley, 717-653-2550; email knissley@redrose.net.

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center: Enjoy working with people?Two year-round VS positions: ***maintenance*** and ***kitchen/dining room/office assistant.***

Contact Laurie Weaver at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Rt. 5 Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666; laurie@laurelville.org; 1-800-839-1021 or 724-423-2056. Laurelville (45 miles SE of Pittsburgh) is a year-round retreat ministry offering adult and youth programs, and hosts a wide variety of church and family events.

Liberty Ministries, a nonprofit prison ministry in Schwenksville, Pa., seeks:

Executive director: Full-time, paid position. Health, vacation benefits. Duties: administrative responsibilities including supervision of activities at state and county prisons and managing after-care program (halfway house).

House parents or single person: Room, board, monthly stipend. Duties: serve as host, household supervision of residents in after-care program and transportation with organization vehicle.

No experience necessary. If interested, please contact Jeff Landis, 106 Wheatsheaf Lane, Telford, PA 18969; 215-721-3292; sfransen@mciunix.mciu.k12.pa.us.

Classified advertising space is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified ad, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

by Rich Preheim

Sailing to salvation

The first Noah's Ark was built to save selected members of God's creation from a futile exercise in treading water. Now a latter-day, grounded version has chalked up another save.

The New District Gospel Church opened its doors last year in the Chinese city of Xiamen. But it is known as the Noah's Ark Church because of the structure's resemblance to that earlier nautical craft. Amity News Service says the design was the idea of the engineer chosen for the project. A nonbeliever, he had started reading the Bible to get some ideas for the new building. He hit on the ark concept after only getting eight chapters into Genesis.

But while completing his design of the new church building, the engineer was so intrigued and moved by what he read that he kept working his way through the Bible. He eventually came to faith, choosing the Savior who calmed the waves over floundering in the eternal lake of fire.

Catholic hospital health

If Catholic distinctives are being lost, as many claim they are, the line is being held on at least one front, reports Martin E. Marty, expert on religion in America and head of the Public Religion Project.

Writing in the project's *Sightings*, Marty notes the medical policies at the Catholic hospital in Enid, Okla. In keeping with Roman Catholic teachings related to reproduction, the hospital, which recently merged operations with a Baptist hospital, will not offer tubal ligation, contraception education and distribution, vasectomies, in-vitro fertilizations and "morning-after" pills.

Some Catholics have lamented the demise of church distinctives as a result of Catholic hospitals merging with non-Catholic ones. But in Enid, at least, those distinctives are alive and well.

Maybe he was using the Julian calendar

This may need verification, but New York City is still believed to be in existence. (Either that or the Yankees are on an extended road trip.)

A news release back on June 11 from prophecy figure James Lloyd had predicted the beginning of the "biblical period known as the Indignation" by the Fourth of July, complete with the death of the secretary-general of the United Nations and the destruction of New York City. Lloyd further claimed former U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is the Antichrist, the Vatican will be moved to Jerusalem and that "True Believers" will be outside any "incorporated" church.

But if his prophecy fails to occur, James said he is prepared to withdraw from prophetic ministry.

Which brings to mind an account from *National Catholic Reporter* about a cult leader who had forecasted divine intervention in Texas earlier this year. When it didn't happen, he said, "My predictions can be considered nonsense."

'Nuff said.

Yet more rational reasons to fear Muslims

From the Seventh-Day Adventists' *Liberty* magazine comes this item for the growing file on religious and cultural paranoia and ignorance:

Someone has been circulating an anonymous flier opposing a Saudi Arabian group building an Islamic private school in Washington D.C. Among the reasons is the school's location near Dulles International Airport. "Any child kidnapped by a foreigner could be on a private jet in Dulles and out of America within one hour," the flier maintains. "We would never know that this kidnapped child had been taken to a closed Muslim country."

The flier also states that the school could be a center for terrorists with high-powered rifles to pick off neighborhood children.

There apparently was no mention of the threat to student fashion: kaffiyahs and scarves instead of baggy shorts and backward baseball caps.

Hot enough for you?

As the World Council of Churches prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary in Harare, Zimbabwe, later this year, *Ecumenical Courier* reflects on the WCC's 1954 worldwide gathering, held in Evanston, Ill., where everyone had a hot time. So hot that rumors were flying around that the Archbishop of Canterbury was wearing nothing under his robe.

And from *The Joyful Noiseletter* on the subject of beating the heat, Linda Poindexter stepped into the pulpit at Christ Episcopal Church in Rockville, Md., on a sweltering Sunday when the church's air conditioner was broken. Looking out on her roasting congregation Poindexter proceeded to give a 10-word sermon: "Hot, isn't it? Hell's like that. Don't go there. Amen."

And you thought it was warmish this summer where you live.

Tidbits

- Following *Christianity Today's* first-ever anti-death penalty editorial in April, 53 percent of letters to the magazine agreed with the stance taken.
- Habitat for Humanity builds an average of 40 houses a day in the United States. (*Green Cross*)
- Among U.S. congregations of 200 or more members, 98 percent have at least one computer, 41 percent have Internet access and 17 percent have their own page on the World Wide Web. (*Messenger*)
- There are more than 6,000 missionaries from South Korea serving throughout the world, making South Korea the largest sending country in Asia. (*Mission Frontiers Bulletin*)
- Josh McDowell's commencement address at Biola University in Los Angeles this spring was only two minutes long. (*Faith in Action*)

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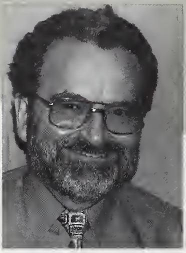

J. Lorne Peachey

That we may be one (3)

Who should belong to the new Mennonite Church?

At first glance, you wouldn't think there would be much of a question. The General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church are merging. Therefore, congregations that are currently either GC, MC or dual would be members of the new denomination, wouldn't they?

Unfortunately, it's not quite that easy. During the past decade, three congregations with dual membership have been asked to leave MC area conferences because they accept noncelibate homosexuals as members. These congregations retain their GC membership.

So if membership in the new church is automatic for current GC and MC congregations, then the MC conferences that struggled long and hard to come to what for them was a painful decision will basically see their work undone. However, if membership in the new denomination is not automatic, then some criteria for this membership will need to be developed—criteria beyond what we now agree to.

But many—both GCs and MCs—find the idea of additional criteria for membership untenable. They particularly don't want to develop these criteria in relation to homosexuality, an issue around which there is so much emotion but so little knowledge.

We must not use integration as an excuse to sidestep what we haven't done well so far: take different viewpoints on a highly volatile issue and still remain sisters and brothers.

How we solve this question of membership will be determined by our goals for merger. Why are GCs and MCs getting together? As I've listened to the discussion for the past 10 years, I've heard two chief reasons emerge for integration: mission and unity.

Mission: We pray that the GC-MC merger will enhance our mission in the world. What is that mission? Jesus put it most succinctly in Luke 4:18-19: "To bring good news to the poor ... to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Unfortunately, most of the history of the Christian church has not put us on the side of the poor, the captives, the oppressed. Instead, in the eyes of the world, we've too often been seen as the rich, the jailers, the oppressors.

With only some 160,000 members in both the United States and Canada, the new integrated Mennonite Church will be only a small drop in the total worldwide Christian church. But size has not kept us from being different in the past; witness our "third way" in relation to peace and justice.

The challenge before us today is to find that third way with the difficult issues we face, including homosexuality and membership. Establishing criteria as we begin a new denomination that would exclude some now part of us is not a creative third way for our church.

Unity: Part of our mission to our world is to witness to the fact that Christians can get along, even when they severely disagree. This ability to get along was an issue that was dear to Jesus. In his longest prayer recorded in the Gospels, Jesus asked God four times in 25 verses to make his followers one (John 17).

Unity was important to Jesus because he found himself in a fractured world, where Jew and Gentile despised each other, both were dominated by the Romans and all groups were splintered by various factions. Unity was also important to Jesus because he knew our world would be just as divided by skin color, nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, tribalism, and ideologies. The unity for which Jesus longed is needed as much today as ever.

As we go into integration, we need to tilt toward a church that shows unity. We need to demonstrate that it is possible for Christians to stay together and love each other, even when we disagree.

Who should belong to the new Mennonite Church? Everyone who is currently either GC or MC. We must not use integration as an excuse to sidestep what we haven't done well so far: take different viewpoints on a highly volatile issue and still remain sisters and brothers in the same church. May we use the occasion of the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church to enhance our mission as a united people to our world.—*jlp*

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the Mennonite

August 4, 1998

Marilyn Miller (left) and Emma Richards reflect on being the first Mennonite women ordained to pastoral ministry.

women in ministry

4 Guatemalans decry 'mentors of barbarity'
7 Area conferences differ on discipline
10 In love from the beginning
15 Where do we learn our history?

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Condemning people to death

I was pleased to read "Doctors, Nurses Associations Take Stand Against Suicide, for Better Care" (July 14). The article mentioned that Oregon is the only state where assisted suicide is legal. This may not be for long as Michigan will have the Merian's Friends Initiative on the November ballot. There were more than 350,000 signatures on a petition to make this possible. If the initiative is passed, physicians against assisted suicide would be required to tell a patient who could help them; a patient could send anybody to the pharmacy to pick up medicine and there is no follow-up after that; a board would be appointed to oversee the program and it would not be accountable to anyone; and this board could discipline physicians up to removal of the license (no one currently has this ability with the exception of the Michigan Board of Licensing). This is a very scary situation.

I often hear that we Christians cannot legislate morals, and maybe we really can't. But I believe this is one time that if we do not go to the polls, we once again are condemning people to death, as we have done our unborn babies. Do we want the death of the terminally ill (and who defines terminal?) on our hands? God help us!—*Leta Gerber, Fairview, Mich.*

Celebration of togetherness

Is the July 7 report of Pacific Northwest Conference's annual meeting ("Dealing with Difficult Decisions") the only report the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church will receive? If so, let me tell you about the overriding sense of celebration, joyous worship, learning and working together during those days as we were hosted by a congregation that was hospitable beyond all measure.

The delegates accepted a new congregation and learned of several more in process with the conference. Our new missions minister, Duncan Smith, was introduced to continue the work of our retiring missions minister. We received tremendous resources from our churchwide staff in reports, personal interaction and as leaders of seminars. Our Peace and Justice Committee brought a statement on the death penalty to the delegates for action following a year of study in our congregations; the statement was accepted. The reports from our conference committees seemed as a litany of praise and thanksgiving for what God is doing. Larry Hauder and James Brenneman brought messages of insight and conviction of courage and faith. I came home energized and encouraged by this conference and know God is here with us even as we do not all agree yet desire to work together.

What is truly noteworthy is the eager anticipation of coming together in our integrated conference and finding how much we need each other and how much we build each other up. God be praised!—*Patricia Hershberger, Pacific Northwest Conference moderator, Woodburn, Ore.*

Diversity has its limits

Your July 14 editorial, "Diversity Is a Gift from God," gave a needed word. The Spirit of God is indeed calling us to see diversity as "a gift from God," not just as something often causing frustration. A word of counsel: Many of us could have allowed your words —and those of Robert Hartzler's Speaking Out piece (July 14) —to sink in more deeply if you had also reassured us that you see diversity has its limits. I know you don't have space to say everything in your editorials. But people will hear you with less anxiety as you reassure them, as the Pacific Southwest Conference delegates did ("Pacific Southwest Adopts Polity Statement after Dropping No-Discipline Position," July 14), that you are not saying that "anything goes" theologically. I know that you don't say "anything goes."—*Harold Miller, Corning N.Y.*

No levels of sin

I was fascinated that Randy Evers mentioned in his letter: "Sinners are welcome in my church and always will be. But they will not be members long if they openly declare that they can practice anything God calls an abomination" (Readers Say, May 19). It seems he is singling out homosexuality as the only sin which God finds displeasing. Homophobia causes so much fear to those who cannot understand a homosexual's relationship (nor want to understand it) that we find ourselves judging which sin is more evil. There are no levels to sin.

We attack two women or men acting out of love for one another but ignore the wrongs of greed, passivity of our faith and acts of violence or prejudice which very much exist in the Mennonite church. We don't ban congregations that ignore the monetary needs in their communities. We don't actively speak out against the global violence in forms of warfare and economic sanctions. Rather, we pick an "evil" that we do not understand and are very much afraid of. We close our doors and hearts

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s say readers say

to our brothers and sisters in Christ and continue to live a faith of utter hypocrisy.

Look not only into the relationship of the gay community and the church but also the lack of action by Mennonite congregations nationwide against the crimes of consumerism, ignorance and prejudice.—*J. Konrad Wert, San Juan, Texas*

Cheap grace?

Your July 7 editorial, "There Is Such a Thing as a Free Lunch!," confuses me. You make valid points, but overall the views expressed seem to fit the classic description of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace"—grace without obedience, without discipleship. This may meet the salvation requirements of some traditions, but it is certainly not, in my opinion, Anabaptist theology.

What you seem to be promoting is grace without any human response at all. To claim that there is nothing we can do to get rid of God's love is to cut huge chunks out of the Bible. Carried to its logical conclusion, your editorial stance completely negates the wrath and judgment of God. It would seem to rule out any concept of hell. Is that what you believe?—*Abraham K. Gehman, Bally, Pa.*

Thought and preparation

I would like to comment on the journalistic qualities of *The Mennonite:* Size of type makes it very readable for us older folks. Good use is made of a variety of sizes and kinds of typefaces. Color is tastefully used—never too bold to compete with overprinted letters. Screened blocks increase attractiveness. Photos and drawings are used in a manner that enhances the layout and design. Obviously a lot of thought and work have gone into the preparation of each issue. Keep up the good work. *—Levi Keidel, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

Cover photo
by Mary E. Klassen

Guatemalan Mennonites join call for closure of notorious military-, police-training facility

GUATEMALA CITY—After decades of sending its military personnel for training at the notorious U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA), Guatemala boasts one of the most brutal armies in Latin America.

Now a group of Guatemalan Mennonites wanting to curtail that brutality has sent a letter to Washington, adding its voice to the growing number in this country against SOA, dubbed "School of the Assassins" by its critics. The Guatemalans believe a lasting peace in their country depends in part on closing the SOA—which has trained some of Latin America's worst human-rights violators—and other such U.S. training facilities.

"Our soldiers, trained by officers who in turn were trained by U.S. officers at these schools, have committed hundreds of massacres and murders of defenseless men, women, children and the elderly—carrying out these atrocities in the most brutal ways imaginable," states the Guatemalan Mennonites' letter, sent to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Washington Office, which has lobbied against SOA.

Located at Fort Benning, Ga., the school provides training for elite Latin American military and police officers. It was founded in 1946 to combat the spread of communism in Central America during the Cold War. Course instruction has included how to infiltrate labor unions, civic and community organizations and opposition political parties as well as infantry training, military intelligence and anti-narcotics operations. One course manual even outlined the use of physical abuse to extricate testimony.

But since 1991, public and political pressure has prompted the SOA to tinker with its curriculum. The school now offers elective instruction in human rights, democracy and military justice in addition to its regular curriculum. These courses, however, are the least attended at the school.

Tremendous evil, grave danger: "We hope that [those in charge of SOA and other training facilities] will understand the tremendous evil they have done to us," the letter states. "May God move their hearts to take the money that goes to maintain these schools and invest in providing an education for each little Guatemalan child that lives on the streets without parents and without hope. Guatemalans need schools for life, not schools for death.

"As Mennonites, we cannot close our eyes or keep quiet in the face of this shameless reality. We ask God in his infinite love and mercy to pardon both the perpetrators and the mentors of this barbarity. And we ask that these schools of death be closed."

The letter was signed by three Guatemalan Mennonites working for peace and justice. But their names are not being released because of a recent increase in threats to human-rights workers. Catholic bishop Juan Gerardi was killed April 25 after spearheading a report which charged the army with most of the human-rights violations against the Guatemalan people during the country's 36-year civil war.

"There's good reason for the [letter writers] not wanting to make their identities known for it could expose them to grave personal danger," says Martin Shupack of the MCC U.S. Washington Office.

Political, public opposition: The letter was released as the Senate was preparing to vote on a foreign aid bill before taking a recess July 31. The bill may include an amendment from Dick Durbin, D-Ill., to eliminate SOA funding. A similar measure in the House of Representatives last year failed by seven votes. The House is expected to vote on SOA again this fall.

A demonstration last Nov. 16—the eighth anniversary of the assassination of six priests and two women at a Jesuit university in San Salvador—drew some 2,000 people to Fort Benning calling for SOA's closure. About 600 people were arrested, including five members of the peace club from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; two Mennonite Voluntary Service workers; and at least one Christian Peacemaker Teams member.

SOA graduates include former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, 19 of the 26 Salvadoran soldiers believed responsible for the Jesuit university killings, two of the accused assassins of Salvadoran archbishop Oscar Romero, and Juan Lopez Ortiz, leader of the 1994 Ocosingo massacre in Chiapas, Mexico. In Guatemala, two of the three accused killers of anthropologist Myrna Mack in 1991 are SOA graduates.—*John Spidaliere of MCC News Service with Rich Preheim*

Va. student wins peace essay contest

Tim Shenk, a junior at Eastern Mennonite High School in Harrisonburg, Va., has won first place in the 11th annual National Peace Essay Contest sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace. Shenk's essay, "How Should Nations Be Reconciled," was one of more than 5,000 entries.

Students were asked to summarize two 20th-century conflicts and describe the manner in which war crimes and human rights violations were handled. Shenk's essay compared reconciliation efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and South Africa.

Shenk, one of 41 state winners, won a $5,000 college scholarship. The winner from South Dakota was Lisa Kaufman, a 1998 graduate of Freeman Academy, a Mennonite high school in Freeman, S.D. She won a $750 scholarship.

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

In any language

King Man Chan, a member of Love Truth Chinese Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, makes signs using Chinese characters at Eastern Mennonite Missions' annual missions festival July 10-12. More than 550 people attended the event, held at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. The festival included commissioning 36 short-term and 75 long-term EMM workers and a celebration of 50 years of Mennonite mission work in Ethiopia.

COM, MBM workers prepare for change

Seminars, worship, fellowship and fun benefit all ages

CAMBRIDGE, Ont.—Their accommodations overlooked stores and a strip mall. They ate well several times a day and went swimming at the Holiday Inn across the street. Their lifestyle was typically North American.

Ironically, those attending the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) Overseas Missions Seminar weren't there to learn how to live a plush lifestyle but how to give one up.

More than 80 MBM and COM mission workers attended the conference, held July 12-18 on the campus of a Cambridge, Ont., Bible school and seminary. Some of the workers had never been overseas before and learned a little better what to expect. Some were retiring after years of service in countries far away. They came from all over North America and the world, representing 24 countries and a handful of languages.

These mission workers attended worship services and preparatory seminars for several hours each day, discussing subjects from transition and re-entry to missions and the North American church.

But what many conference attendees appreciated most were the informal times of gathering around meals and free time. "Over the table was the most meaningful time for me," says Connie Byler, an MBM worker in Spain.

Says Janie Blough, an MBM worker in France: "The fellowship and evening meetings were fun. When you come out of such intense experiences, you need to laugh together."

In addition to cutthroat games of Rook and trips for ice cream, the conference provided an opportunity to reunite with old friends and make many new ones—all of whom had or would soon have similar experiences and feelings. That was especially important to the young people.

"It was good to discuss our experiences," says 14-year-old Emily Dueck, who recently returned from Paraguay with her parents, COM-MBM workers Linda and Paul Dueck. "It was helpful to talk with other kids going through the same experiences."

Seminar participants even held their own version of the World Cup soccer tournament, which was won by the team of Western Europe workers.

Overseas workers were commissioned for service at a July 16 service at Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

"The most meaningful part of our time together was the bonding of the mission of the church," says Kathi Suderman, COM worker to China. "Now I'll be able to make connections when I read about people."—*Rachel Lewis of GCMC and MBM news services*

> **It was helpful to talk with other kids going through the same experiences.**
>
> —*Emily Dueck*

Increasing number of Germans looking to MVS for cross-cultural experience—in United States

KNOB NOSTER, Mo.—Growing up in Germany, with its extensive network of social services, Barbara Hahm didn't know much about homelessness.

She knows now.

Hahm is one of a growing number of Germans working in the United States through Mennonite Voluntary Service; seven have joined MVS in the past year. Hahm serves as a counselor with a shelter in Seattle.

"We don't have many [homeless] in Germany," she says. "There's a different social-welfare system; it's pretty hard to be homeless. There's more low-income housing. ... The mentally ill are in institutions.

"I realized how small the step to homelessness can be [in the United States]. One car accident where you can't pay the bills and you are out in the street. In Germany, you can't be without medical insurance."

MVS workers from Germany come through two European Anabaptist-related voluntary service placement organizations. Christliche Dienste was started in 1987, spurred by the 1984 Mennonite World Conference assembly in Strasbourg, France. Peace and mission agencies supported by the Mennonite churches in Germany wanted an organization to link Mennonite congregations with suitable voluntary service assignments. Today about 40 percent of Christliche Dienste volunteers are Mennonite. The second organization is Eirene, founded in 1957 by the historic peace churches (Mennonite and Church of the Brethren), International Fellowship of Reconciliation and other European Christians.

"We've always taken volunteers through Christliche Dienste," says MVS personnel director Kristen Mayhue. "There are two reasons for a more recent increase: adding an organization, Eirene; and the closing of Eastern Mennonite Missions' voluntary service program, which took a lot of German volunteers."

Over the years, Mennonite voluntary service programs have tended to draw 18- and 19-year-old German males working off their alternative service requirements; young German men are required to serve two years in the military or an approved alternative service placement. But Mayhue says MVS is beginning to see more older volunteers, both women who are not required to serve and men who have already done their alternative service but want to do another service assignment.

Hahm, who studied social work and is the daughter of a Lutheran pastor, says she joined MVS because she wanted "to do something related to my studies and to live in a foreign country. ... I went into social work because I've wanted to serve people all my life. You don't do social work for the money."

Hahm

Vierus and Gunsch

Thomas Vierus, who has served as a Seventh-Day Adventist pastor, and Candy Gunsch, his wife, joined the MVS unit in Richmond, Va., after finishing post-graduate studies in Germany. "I wanted a cross-cultural experience," he says. "And I'm taking a sabbatical from pastoring."

Adds Gunsch: "I wanted to learn English and be in another country. And we wanted to know another circle of the church."

Gunsch works at a transition house for women and children trying to leave abusive situations; Vierus is volunteer coordinator at a community center.

Christliche Dienste and Eirene staff do all the processing and some orientation for volunteers who come to MVS, although they also go through regular MVS orientation. MVS provides the German volunteers with stipends, room and board, but the volunteers or their organization cover most of the cost of their travel to and from the service assignment.

"We only take German volunteers who come to us through Christliche Dienste or Eirene," Mayhue says. "Even if someone applies to us on their own, we tell them to go through one of those two organizations. If a potential volunteer is in line with who Christliche Dienste or Eirene is, they're probably in line with who we are."

Hahm, Gunsch and Vierus were among some 130 MVS workers, plus another 20 MVS staff members and their families who met for an all-unit retreat May 25-29 at Knob Noster (Mo.) State Park. There are 30 MVS units in the United States and Canada.—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC and MBM news services*

Doctor to Amish nationally honored

Barb Hostetler calls Elton Lehman a gift from God.

In 35 years of practice as an osteopathic physician in the heavily Amish areas of Wayne and Holmes counties in Ohio, Lehman has delivered 6,150 babies. And Hostetler, an Amish woman, has assisted in some of the births.

"For some reason, Doc Lehman just cares about us," she says.

For his efforts, Lehman has been named 1998 Country Doctor of the Year. The award, by a national placement firm for doctors, honored him for "exemplifying the spirit, skill and dedication of America's rural medical practitioners."

Lehman, who lives in Mount Eaton and is a member of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church, says, "I do the whole gamut, from prenatal to death."—*USA Today*

Two homosexuality-related resolutions highlight GC-MC polity differences

TULSA, Okla.—Members of two area conferences felt a lot of unity July 3-5, worshiping together and talking about things like their exploration of regional integration.

But South Central and Western District conferences were far apart on one issue: how to respond to a congregation that is willing to accept noncelibate homosexuals as members.

Rainbow Mennonite Church of Kansas City, Kan., belongs to both conferences. South Central this spring decided to expel Rainbow, an action that will take effect next March. The controversy over Rainbow prompted both conferences to bring resolutions to their delegates seeking to clarify their positions and to establish policies for the future.

Western District delegates voted 294 to 58 in favor of their resolution, reaffirming congregational freedom to decide whom to accept as members. "We do not see it as appropriate for conference to dictate criteria for an individual's membership in congregations," the resolution states.

South Central delegates decided, with a handful of dissenting votes, to send back to conference leaders for revisions a resolution on congregational discipline. The resolution would have taken discipline decisions away from delegates and given them to the conference executive committee.

The motion to ask for revisions did not mandate any specific changes. Incoming South Central moderator Howard Hershberger says he can't predict how much the executive committee would revise the resolution.

"There may be some softening of language, but the general principles will probably still be there," he says. "It's going to be difficult to get a lot of change from the executive committee."

The resolution calls for a congregation at variance with the conference to be given a period of time to comply. If it does not, the resolution states, "the executive committee will interpret the congregation's action as a decision to remove [itself] from the conference."

The two resolutions highlighted a key difference between the polity of the Mennonite Church (MC), which has a tradition of conference authority, and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), which has a tradition of congregational freedom. And that is something people are concerned about, says Kathy Goering Reid, a member of the Integration Transition Committee, which includes representatives from the Western District, South Central and Rocky Mountain conferences.

"We wonder, Are our differences too great to find a common ground?" she says.

Hershberger says the South Central resolution is a step to further consultation with Western District on the polity question. "We felt we needed a position statement so we can enter into dialogue," he says.

Reid says people are wondering if polity will be decided at the area conference or denominational level. "People want to hear the answer before we proceed much further," she says.

A denominational committee has been formed to make a proposal about only one part of the polity question: how congregations will join the integrated church. That proposal will go to MC and GC delegates at next summer's joint convention in St. Louis.—*Paul Schrag for GCMC News Service*

Regional merger plan gets approval

A committee can now start work on a model for the integration of Illinois, Indiana-Michigan and Ohio, all Mennonite Church area conferences, and Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Indiana-Michigan, at its annual meeting July 23-25, joined the other three conferences in approving the merger proposal. Ninety-one percent of Indiana-Michigan delegates voted for the plan. The other conferences approved it earlier this year.

The integration implementation committee will hold its first meeting next month and is supposed to bring a model to a meeting of all four conferences in 2000. Each conference will then vote separately on the idea in 2001.

Homosexual supporters hold conference

WICHITA, Kan.—Her mother thought her daughter was promiscuous and in danger of contracting AIDS; she was, after all, a lesbian. The daughter was shocked and hurt. "I'm a Christian," she told her mother. "Telling you my sexuality doesn't change my values."

This story and many others were shared during the Supportive Congregations Network (SCN) second international conference July 24-26 in Wichita, attended by 110 people—homosexuals as well as their heterosexual supporters. Events included worship, workshops and small-group discussions.

SCN is an organization of 21 U.S. and Canadian Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations which accept noncelibate homosexuals as members.

In the past nine months, two SCN member congregations have been expelled from the Mennonite Church: Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, and Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan. During conference worship times, pastors of both congregations told of their experiences.

"We felt like we were being asked, 'Why don't you just leave?' " said Rainbow pastor Frank Ward. "It made us feel like we … had no right to ask questions or raise controversial issues."—*Esther Bohn Groves with Melanie Zuercher*

Leann Toews, moderator of Western District Conference, drew the line during the Supportive Congregations Network conference July 24-26.

"The leadership of the Western District Conference is not in the business of kicking and keeping people out of the church," she told the gathering.

Should that change, Toews said, she would no longer be moderator.
—Melanie Zuercher

The high threshold

Reflections on the first two Mennonite women pastors

by Anne Stuckey

A Japanese expression—"The threshold is high"—describes the first high step into a traditional Japanese home. At the entrance you must first remove your shoes and then take a high step over the threshold in order to enter.

This image also fits the experience of the first women called to congregational pastoral ministry 25 years ago. (See sidebar, p. 9, on the first Mennonite woman ordained in North America.) Emma Richards was called to such a ministry by Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church and ordained by the Illinois Conference in 1973, making her the first ordained woman in the Mennonite Church. And in 1976, Marilyn Miller was ordained by the Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church to serve as co-pastor of Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

"It is relationships in life that are most important. Love for God and love for people."—*Marilyn Miller*

Emma made some decisions early on that provided the framework for her years as a pastor. In her spiritual life she decided not to let her inner well run dry. Even though this meant getting up at 4 a.m. to pray, read Scripture and meditate, this daily connection to God made ministry possible.

In the congregation, she decided that the agenda for ministry would come from the congregation, not from her, and that she would lead by loving the congregation, its purpose and its mission. Emma preached well-prepared, expository sermons, keeping Jesus central both in sermons and prayers. And she paired this priority with being an Anabaptist-Mennonite pastor in teaching and in living.

At a time when women pastors were scarce and often called upon to serve the broader church, Emma decided to stay in the congregation, especially in the early years, rather than go out and preach in other churches or lead conferences on women in ministry. She wanted to allay fears that with a woman as pastor men would not come to church, attendance would decline and men would not go to a woman pastor for help. But this was not the experience of Lombard Mennonite Church.

Emma Richards and Marilyn Miller spoke of their years in ministry at a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women to pastoral ministry (see sidebar, p. 9), held Jan. 26 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., during a meeting of women pastors. This article recounts their stories. Anne Stuckey is Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries minister of congregational leadership.

Mary E. Klassen

Relationships are most important: Marilyn Miller

What sustained this call for Emma was the certainty that she was always inside the will of God for her life. She knew that Jesus was near her and that the Holy Spirit was guiding her.

A new generation of women: When you hear Emma talk today, you notice her thankfulness. She is thankful for the overarching mercy of God through Jesus Christ, for early church leaders who trusted her when others were raising their eyebrows. She is thankful for a new generation of women who have heard the call and taken the step into pastoral leadership with integrity and skill. And she is thankful for her children, her husband, Joe, the home and the congregation in which she grew up.

Marilyn Miller tells of hearing the call for more pastors when she was in elementary school in the late 1940s. She heard: "The church at large is greatly in need of pastors. Pray that more young men will open their ears and hear the call of the Lord." Standing in her backyard in Kansas and looking up at the stars, she asked God that if he was in need of more pastors, why wasn't she created a man? After watching her father, who was a pastor, she knew that she, too, would love to be a pastor. But it wasn't until after marriage and after staying at home to raise her children for nine years that Marilyn even had the chance to prepare for ministry. God made that possible.

Marilyn's father, Milo Kaufman, supported her call to ministry and never questioned her ordination. After being president of Hesston (Kan.) College for 19 years, he had opportunity to travel extensively throughout the church. When people asked what he thought about women being called to ministry, he would say, "When I look at women around the church using their gifts, I have to say with Peter, 'If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us … who am I to stand in God's way?' " (Acts 11:17).

When Marilyn was questioning whether it was necessary to be ordained in order to pastor, a saint from the Arvada congregation climbed the hill behind the church with her just to talk. This woman said, "Maybe if you allow us to celebrate the gifts God has given you, then we can celebrate the gifts God has given us a little better."

Totality of life: God, children, congregation and family all come together in pastoral ministry. Marilyn's reflections on the death of her son in a kayaking accident, her daughter's wedding and the similarities between church planting in Boulder, Colo., and developing a home brings one back to the totality of life in ministry, which includes all these things. "It is relationships in life that are most important," she says. "Love for God and love for people."

Emma said it and Marilyn echoed that the threshold to ministry is indeed high, but they are glad they took the high step and in so doing, are thankful they were upheld by God's grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. And if there is any glory, they said, it belongs to God. Menno Simons wrote of the vocation of preachers, "They were driven into this office by the Spirit of God, with pious hearts" (*Foundations*). That is true of both Marilyn Miller and Emma Richards.

Mary E. Klassen

Daily connection to God: Emma Richards

While women who have been called to ministry have experienced many disappointments and hurts in the past 25 years, the grace of God gave each the power to take that high step into ministry.

Emma decided that the agenda for ministry would come from the congregation, not from her.

Called to seek and serve Christ

One Saturday when Keith Swartzentruber, the voluntary service intern working with Mennonite Central Committee's United Nations office, and I were in the church office at Menno House, a guest who had just come to the house came in and asked Keith, "Are you John Rempel?" Keith said no and explained who he was. The guest then looked around the room in a puzzled way and said to Rhonda, who was standing at the door, "You said your pastor was here."

I did not take on the role of interim minister of Manhattan (N.Y.) Mennonite Fellowship in order to prove something about the ability of a woman to lead a congregation. For a long time I've felt called by God to serve the church. I saw this particular ministry as a specific way to respond to that call. My gifts and graces seem to fit in here. I am needed not because I am a woman or in spite of it but because the yoke of pastoral work in this space and time fits over my shoulders. This has more to do with me as a human being struggling to respond to God's call than with my gender. Within our fellowship no one has questioned the appropriateness of having a woman pastor, but outside our cozy little congregation I am often confronted by it.

I grew up in a conservative branch of Lutheranism that did not and does not ordain women. I did not speak of my sense of call when I was growing up, and I left quietly rather than trying to make my sense of rejection known to my church or even to my family. In churches where only men are eligible for certain positions of leadership, there is a profound sense of disempowerment for women. This is perhaps especially true for women who do not have a sense of calling themselves. Women who do feel called to ministry sometimes fight this in aggressive ways. They can become so militant that their ability to proclaim the whole gospel to everyone is lost. In seeking to distance myself from that approach perhaps I have not spoken up enough on this issue.

The problem is made more difficult because it is possible to read the Bible, especially certain passages in the New Testament, as excluding women from church leadership positions. I believe that the passage in 1 Corinthians 14 has simply been misinterpreted, but the passages in 1 Timothy 2 and some others reflect the patriarchal worldview the writers inhabited.

Our culture is vastly different from that of the New Testament, but it is true in our culture also that I do not look like a minister because I am a woman. Many of you may not look like ministers either. You may be too young, too old or have too much or too little education. Yet we are all called to seek and serve Christ. Although we are not all set apart for specific leadership roles in the church, we are all ministers of the gospel. May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all as we minister to one another and to the world. Amen.
—Phyllis Bristow-Johnson

The first Mennonite woman on record to be ordained a minister by Mennonites in North America was Ann Jemima Allebach, who was ordained Jan. 15, 1911, at First Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, by N.B. Grubb. Born May 8, 1874, she was baptized at Eden Mennonite Church, Schwenksville, Pa. In 1893 she attended classes at New York University, Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. There she was engaged in the women's suffrage movement and served among the poor. Later she approached her mentor, N.B. Grubb, and her own pastor about ordination, and they agreed. She returned to churches as a guest preacher from time to time, and she drew large audiences. In 1916 she began serving a Reformed congregation. She died in 1918 of a heart attack.
—from The Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. V

Beginnings
a tM series

In love from the beginning

How do we come to know God, to love God and to know ourselves as loved by God?

by Sara Wenger Shenk

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.
—*1 John 4:7-8 NRSV*

But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning—you must walk in it.
—*2 John 5-6 NRSV*

> *I saw for certain, both here and elsewhere, that before ever he made us, God loved us; and that his love has never slackened, nor ever shall. … Our beginning was when we were made, but the love in which he made us never had beginning. In it we have our beginning.*
>
> —Julian of Norwich

While reading about beginnings and love in 1 and 2 John, I felt drawn to Julian of Norwich's reflections on love. John speaks much about love. And so does Julian, a woman of Norwich, England, born in 1342.

Julian received a number of dramatic revelations of the love of God that she wrote down in her "Showings." These collected revelations and her reflections on them are considered among the most profound and complex of all medieval spiritual writings.

Julian writes: "It was at this time that our Lord showed me spiritually how intimately he loves us. … And he showed me more, a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, on the palm of my hand, round like a ball. I looked at it thoughtfully and wondered, 'What is this?' And the answer came, 'It is all that is made.' I marveled that it continued to exist and did not suddenly disintegrate; it was so small. And again my mind supplied the answer, 'It exists, both now and for ever, because God loves it.' In short, everything owes its existence to the love of God.

"In this 'little thing' I saw three truths. The first is that God made it; the second is that God loves it; and the third is that God sustains it. But what he is who is in truth Maker, Keeper and Lover I cannot tell, for until I am essentially united with him I can never have full rest or real happiness. … For he himself is eternity and has made us for himself alone, has restored us by his blessed passion and keeps us in his blessed love. And all because he is goodness."

John and Julian weave the cradle of our beginnings out of pure love. God, in whom we live and move and have our beginning, is love. And if we desire to know God, our knowing will be inseparably related to living a life whose sustenance and expression are love.

There is perhaps nothing else so exalted and so misunderstood as love. We endlessly yearn for it in our songs, pursue it in our stories and experiment with it in our movies. If an artist were to paint each person's life, the entire canvas could be filled with our longing for love, our fulfillment in love, our alienation from love. No part of anyone's canvas would be untouched by our desire for love. We are made for love and will seek for love wherever we think it can be found. And yet love, true love, will not be found until we come to know ourselves as loved by the One in whom we have our beginning.

Obedience: How do we come to know God, to love God and to know ourselves as loved by God? For John, knowing God and loving God are closely intertwined. And not only are knowing and loving bound up together, but each of them are inseparably related to obedience. John writes, "Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). He also writes, "Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments" (1 John 2:3). And then he writes, "And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments" (2 John 6a).

John is exploring further the intimate link between loving and knowing that extends throughout the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. In the Old Testament, the word "know," which is used to speak of lovemaking between a husband and wife, is the same word used for our knowledge of God. Even in Greek, where the concepts are not likely to be mixed, the New Testament writers continue to link knowing and loving. The most common word for "know" used in the New Testament is also used for lovemaking. Clearly the implication is that true knowing comes from the sort of personal investment in a relationship that resembles the covenanted intimacy of sexual embrace.

Knowing God involves opening oneself to God with the transparency and vulnerability that is most closely paralleled in our trusting, passionate knowing of one another. On becoming naked to the depths of our souls, in a spirit of repentance, we come to know the unimagined depths of God's forgiving love.

Beginnings is a series of occasional articles that reflect on selected biblical passages where the word "beginning" occurs.

True knowing comes from the sort of personal investment in a relationship that resembles the covenanted intimacy of sexual embrace.

And in the embrace of God's love, we are freed to know ourselves more truly and to live our lives in greater harmony with our Maker.

Selfless love: John describes the strong relationship between knowing, loving and obeying God's commandments. It jars the consciousness, somehow, to link obedience of the commandments with the wonderful intimacy of a loving relationship. Yet John shows again and again that if we are to know God and to enjoy a loving relationship with God, it comes by way of obedience. The love of which John speaks is not a nice love manufactured out of wishful thinking but a love that is woven out of the moral fiber of a just and righteous God. "Little children," writes John, "let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action" (1 John 3:18). The love that John asks us to emulate is nothing less than the selfless love of Christ himself, who said: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:12-13).

The love of God in which we have our beginning, the love of Christ that meets us in the vulnerability of our repentance, is a self-giving love. As we respond, giving ourselves to live together lovingly, in obedience to the just and righteous patterns that God has made known to us, we will come to know God who is love. This God, Julian declares, made us for himself alone and "has restored us by his blessed passion and keeps us in his blessed love. And all because he is goodness."

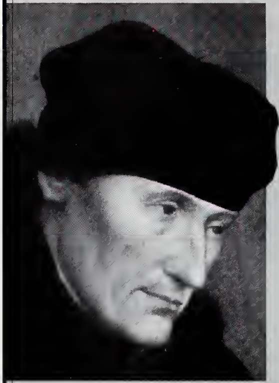
Sara Wenger Shenk is assistant dean at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Vada Snider

Hesston College president reappointed

HESSTON, Kan.—Loren E. Swartzendruber, president of Hesston (Kan.) College since 1993, has been given a third term in office by the college and Mennonite Board of Education (MBE). The three-year term will begin July 1, 1999.

The reappointment came following a review by the Hesston board of overseers and MBE. The review committee cited Swartzendruber's "Christian commitment combined with his administrative abilities and leadership qualities."



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*the Anabaptists,
and the
Great Commission*

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Mennonite groups issue call to Christian unity

ELKHART, Ind.—Saying that all Christians can learn from each other, two Mennonite bodies have declared Christian unity a biblical "imperative to be obeyed."

The statement comes from the Mennonite World Conference executive committee and the Interchurch Relations Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, an academic group working at ecumenical issues. The two committees met together July 21-22 in Elkhart, Ind.

"As members of the Mennonite World Conference family, we recognize that God has given us some unique faith experiences and insights we can contribute to other Christians," the statement says. "We recognize that there is much we can learn from Christians of other traditions."

The statement goes on to say: "We should not refuse to witness and serve in some ways with others just because we cannot do everything with them. In such cooperative efforts, we should not go beyond the extent of the unity we have found and thereby depreciate the meaning of truth and unity."

MHS names winners of study funds

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Health Services has announced the recipients of its financial awards for students in nursing, mental health, counseling and developmental disabilities.

Recipients of $2,000 Miller-Erb Nursing Development grants/loans include Susan E. Brunk of Wyncote, Pa., who is pursuing graduate studies at the Institute of Midwifery and Women's Health, Philadelphia; and Ann Graber Hershberger of Linville, Va., who is working on a doctorate in nursing at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Recipients of $1,000 Elmer Ediger Memorial Scholarships include Evelyn McPhee of Mishawaka, Ind., who is working on a master's degree in social work at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich.; and Vera Smucker of Goshen, Ind., who is working on a master's degree in community counseling at Andrews.

Events

"Reaching Out, Reaching In: Spiritual Care for the Aging" symposium, Aug. 4, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. Contact: Gary Stucky, 540-432-4999, stuckygl@emu.edu or Lonnie Yoder, 540-432-4272, yoderld@emu.edu.

Southeast Conference annual meeting, Oct. 2-4, Brooksville, Fla.

Franklin Conference annual meeting, Oct. 4, Chambersburg, Pa.

Workers

Beyer, Victoria D., Perkasie, Pa., is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in China, teaching English.

Brubaker, Brian, Bluffton, Ohio, is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in China teaching English.

Claassen, Jenette and Kevin, Bass Lake, Calif., are beginning three-year MCC assignments in Cambodia. Kevin will work as a finance and administrative assistant; Jenette's position is still to be determined.

Hang, Tong, was licensed May 17 as pastor of United Hmong Mennonite Church, St. Paul, Minn.

Hess, Rachel and Dennis Maust, Lititz, Pa., are beginning three-year MCC assignments in Tanzania, working at job creation.

Leuz, Laura, Elkhart, Ind., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in China, teaching English.

Meitzner, Laura, Coopersburg, Pa., is beginning a three-year MCC assignment in Indonesia as a professor and rural development consultant.

Miller, K. Erich, Goshen, Ind., is beginning a three-year MCC assignment in Thailand as a documentation center worker.

Reed, Harold, has been named interim director of Overseas Ministries for Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Wall, John and Karen Kaufman are beginning three-year MCC assignments in Bosnia as rural promoters.

Births

Cagle, Brett Charles, June 25, to Jennifer (Cox) and Lance Cagle, Fisher, Ill.

Deavers, Amanda Rose, July 7, to Paul and Tammy Deavers, Valparaiso, Ind.

Eastman, Molly Christine, July 2, to Nathan and Rachel (Emery) Eastman, Mio, Mich.

Gascho, Blaine Christian, May 21, to DeWayne and Valerie (Melch) Gascho, Cairo, Neb.

Gilbertson, Caleb Glenn, June 20, to Charles and Debra (Gerber) Gilbertson, Milwaukee.

Gingrich, Lauren Elaine, June 29, to Bonnie (Miller) and Mike Gingrich, Bristol, Ind.

Hostetler, Erin Rae, July 14, to Larion and Ruby (Kauffman) Hostetler, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hostetter, Jaden Eric, July 7, to Eric and Janet (Heatwole) Hostetter, Harrisonburg, Va.

McClure, John Miles III, April 28, to John and Kristina (Geiser) McClure, Saginaw, Mich.

Schrock, Sheldon Tobias Lee, July 18, to Kevin and Maree (Gerig) Schrock, Shipshewana, Ind.

Stutzman, Emily Burkholder, June 15, to Elaine (Burkholder) and Robert Stutzman, Edmonton.

Weaver, Seth Dyck, June 13, to Jonathan Dyck and Lisa Weaver, Madison, Wis.

Weirich, Lauren Rebecca, June 30, to Kyle and Tracey (Male) Weirich, Knox, Ind.

Yaste, Ryan Andrew, July 12, to Brenda (Edwards) and Kevin Yaste, Johnstown, Pa.

Zehr, Kyle Merritt, July 4, to Michelle (Jones) and Rick Zehr, Lowville, N.Y.

Marriages

Alwine/Miller: Jennifer Alwine, Hollsopple, Pa., and Daniel Miller, Pullman, Wash., May 23, by Brian Morphonios.

Calvert/Corwin: Heather Calvert, Gulfport, Miss., and Timothy Corwin, Gulfport, May 30, by David Kniss.

Clemmer/Hiltebeitel: Jennifer Clemmer, Harleysville, Pa., and Eric Hiltebeitel, King of Prussia, Pa., June 27, by Ben Lapp.

Glick/Lehman: Nevin Glick, Mifflintown, Pa., and Heidi Lehman, McAlisterville, Pa., June 27, by Gary Kraybill.

Hoing/Miller: David Hoing, Wichita, Kan., and Amy Miller, Wichita, July 4, by David Morrow.

Kauffman/Neilson: Ryan Kauffman, Wayland, Iowa, and Heather Neilson, Winfield, Iowa, July 4, by Steve Good and Rod Cooper.

Kaufman/Kuhn: Douglas Jay Kaufman, Boswell, Pa., and Tonya Louise Kuhn, Beaverdale, Pa., May 30, by Wayne Lasure and Homer Schrock.

Lantz/Miller: Ralph Lantz, LaGrange, Ind., and Debbie Miller, Topeka, Ind., June 20, by Carl Horner.

Nitka/Plaikner: Mary Ann Nitka, Johnstown, Pa., and John Plaikner, Tire Hill, Pa., June 6, by Elvin Holsopple.

Vargese/Westra: Roy Vargese, Edmonton, and Lisa Westra, Edmonton, July 10, by Jean Jacques Goulet.

Deaths

Alderfer, Mary Histand, 92, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 12 of complications from heart failure. Survivors: husband, David; children Joseph, Frederick, Edward, James, Daniel; 14 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: June 18 at Harrisonburg by Phil Kniss.

Conrad, Daniel, 92, Columbiana, Ohio, died June 7 of heart failure. Survivors: daughter, Esther Rohrer; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: June 10 at Columbiana by Robert Yoder.

Helmuth, Nellie Wagner, 81, Eureka, Ill., died May 29. Survivors: son, Duane; four grandchildren. Burial: June 2 at Eureka by Rick Troyer.

Horsch, Mark Ernest, 28, Lombard, Ill., died June 26 in a boating accident. Survivors: parents, John and Gretchen Horsch. Burial: July 2 by Bob and Mag Richer Smith and Joe Richard.

Isenschmid, Mabel Yoder, 54, Hanoverton, Ohio, died July 13 of complications from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Survivors: husband, Sydney; children Heidi Mapel, Amy Soliday, Mary; five grandchildren. Memorial service July 16 by Daniel Hooley. Cremated.

Kauffman, Carl, 61, Johnstown, Pa., died April 21 of cancer. Survivors: wife Erma; children Ricky, Donna Speigle, Elaine Horst; six grandchildren. Burial: April 24 at Thomas Mills, Pa., by Wayne Lasure and Elvin Holsopple.

Nyce, Gladys Sue Nice, 54, Telford, Pa., died July 11. Survivors: husband, John Sr.; children John Jr., Christopher, David; one grandchild. Burial: July 16 at Franconia, Pa., by John Ehst and Eric Musser.

Preheim, Lynn, 77, Freeman, S.D., died July 1 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Ethel; children Gwen Bartel, Dorothy, Nina, Liz Osborne, Kirk, Bill, Mike; seven grandchildren. Memorial service July 3 by Gene Waltner. Cremated.

Stichter, Fred, 99, Carlsbad, N.M., died May 8. Survivors: wife, Bertha; children Dennis, Eileen Eash; five grandchildren. Burial: May 14 at Wakarusa, Ind., by Peter Hartman.

Wenger, Jean, 62, Columbiana, Ohio, died July 1 from complications from a stroke. Survivors: parents, David and Letha Wenger. Burial: July 5 at Columbiana by Larry Rohrer.

Yoder, Annabelle King, Belleville, Pa., died July 10, of cancer. Survivors: husband, Roland; children Michael, Edward; eight grandchildren. Burial: July 13 at Belleville by Ivan Yoder.

Yoder, Blanche Croyle, 87, Davidsville, Pa., died June 6. Survivors: son, Moses; two grandchildren. Burial: June 9 at Davidsville by Donald Sharp.

Yutzi, Esther Lydia Ann, 85, San Diego, died July 2 of cancer. Burial: July 8 at Pigeon, Mich., by Thomas Beachy.

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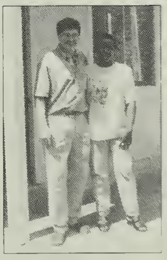
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Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa., is expanding its ministerial team by adding a full-time ***youth minister.*** Interested people should send resume to Search Committee, Franconia Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 26, Franconia, PA 18924-0026.

Neil Avenue Mennonite Church, Columbus, Ohio, alumni and friends are invited to attend a ***celebration weekend*** Aug. 22-23, 1998. Growth has prompted a move to a larger facility. Come help us celebrate. Call 614-299-7970 for information and brochure.

Ten Thousand Villages, Alexandria, Va., needs a full-time ***assistant manager.*** Qualifications include the ability to display merchandise, manage volunteers and deal with the store's customers.

Contact Jon Landis at 703-684-1435.

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church seeks part-time ***music director,*** beginning Sept. 1, 1998. The music director leads senior and children's choirs, directs congregational singing, develops vocal and instrumental ensembles for use in worship, and serves on the worship committee.

Send resumes to Marlene Kruger Wiebe, 57 Stirling Avenue North, Kitchener, ON N2H 3G4; 519-576-0859; email timmar@golden.net.

Ten Thousand Villages, a program of Mennonite Central Committee, is looking for ***people to volunteer*** at its headquarters in Akron, Pa. Volunteers are needed beginning Aug. 17 or 24 for three to four months. Room and board provided.

For more information, please contact Sherrie Ober at 717-859-8100 or email smo@villages-mcc.org. Come and be a part of an exciting and rewarding experience.

Shalom Ministries seeks ***counselor.*** Individual with independent license in social work, counseling or psychology is sought to work with Mennonite pastors, congregation members and others in the community in northwest Ohio. Willingness to work within the context of the church in a paradigm of wholeness and healing required. Responsibilities include consultation, education and therapy.

Interested individuals contact James Burkett, Box 188, West Liberty, OH 43357; 937-465-0010.

Mennonite Indemnity, Inc. (MII): ***management position.*** MII of Akron, Pa., is a reinsurance and general agency participant with property mutual aid service providers across the country. This person will direct and manage the operations of the Anabaptist and Brethren Agency, an MII subsidiary, and participate as a member of the MII/ABA management team. Insurance company or agency experience required.

Send resume to MII, Attn. Lloyd Kuhns, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; or call 888-685-7600.

Peace Mennonite Community Church, Aurora, Colo., seeks enthusiastic, Christ-based ***pastor*** for congregation with new worship facility. Emphasis on growth, spiritual nurture and outreach.

Send resume to Jill Mazowiecki, 785 Oneida St., Denver, CO 80220.

Western Mennonite School has positions to begin Aug. 24, 1998:

Librarian: part-time position to provide leadership and supervision to the library and resource center; certification desired. Computer technology skills preferred; may be combined with other duties for full-time position.

English teacher: part-time position to teach upper secondary-level English classes; may be combined with other duties for full-time position. Teacher certification required.

Tutors: part-time or full-time positions available; teacher certification desired.

Contact Eric Martin or Darrel White at Western Mennonite School, 9045 Wallace Rd. NW, Salem, OR 97304; 503-363-2000.

Question #20:

"What holds them together?"

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by Gordon Houser

History is messy, complex. It is not neat and tidy, as too much of the media we encounter present it.

Unfortunately, too many of us, particularly children, get a warped sense of history from the movies we watch. That influence on our sense of who we are and who we were is all the greater when we aren't reading history. (Children may also receive a distorted view of history in their textbooks. See box below.)

Among the worst offenders on the big screen are animated features geared to children. *Pocahontas* changes the captured 12-year-old girl—who eventually died in England—into a lithesome, 1990s New Age woman who falls for the handsome John Smith. Even worse is *Anastasia*, which completely rewrites history by having the Romanov daughter survive her family's murder (which we know she did not) and by presenting the monk Rasputin as a demon with exaggerated magical powers. His evil is not only devilish but made light of.

The recent film *Mulan*, which again produces a heroine who's tough but falls for a good-looking man, is perhaps less offensive, but probably only because we know so little of Chinese history. It's a fun adventure, even though 30,000 people die in a battle—something that goes unmentioned.

Imagine what Disney would do with the story of early Anabaptists. Most likely we would see a beautiful female martyr (who isn't martyred) with a 20-inch waist who helps save a handsome male martyr (who isn't martyred) from evil, hulking torturers (shirtless) who are either Catholics or Calvinists (but that won't be mentioned; instead they'll look Middle Eastern). Our heroine would be accompanied by a funny, talking animal (a parrot, a dragon, a bat), and they would all escape at the last minute by flying through the air (from a castle or cathedral perhaps) to knock out the bad guys.

The problem isn't always with animated shows. Even a good film like *Amistad*, which brought to people's attention a little-known episode in American history, depicted the Christian abolitionists, who were the main ones responsible for the slaves' eventual freedom, as buffoons mostly in the background.

Books aren't always reliable either, so it's best to look at different ones and note their bias. One excellent set of books for children (though adults will enjoy them, too) is the 10-volume *A History of US* by Joy Hakim (Oxford University Press). It covers the history of the United States, but it includes more than the usual focus on powerful white men's activities. For example, it has an entire chapter on the *Amistad* episode.

Saving Private Ryan is shot so realistically, so graphically, that it is difficult to watch. The killing, the maiming, the destruction is horrific.

Steven Spielberg's latest film, however, *Saving Private Ryan* (rated R), is an example of film presenting audiences the reality, the messiness, of historical events. While the story of a group of soldiers sent to find a Private Ryan whose three brothers have been killed in action is fictional, it takes place during and after the landing at Normandy in World War II.

The film is shot so realistically, so graphically, that it is difficult to watch. Using hand-held cameras and seen from the perspective of the soldiers, it feels like you are there. The killing, the maiming, the destruction is horrific. This is no glamorous, gung-ho, John Wayne movie about the Good War. You watch men die, hear their screams, their cries for their mothers, and you feel the anguish and the anger of their fellow soldiers who hold them as they die.

At the same time, the enemy is not a faceless evil. You encounter their humanity, their vulnerability. And the action rings true, from accounts I've read of this and other wars, as crazy things happen, and the so-called good guys don't always walk away.

Part of me wants to say, Don't go to this movie. Because it is so well shot and acted, it may give you nightmares; it feels too real. Yet another part of me wants anyone who even considers the military to see this film and be warned of the reality, the horror of war.

While films often present distorted views of history, it is only fair to say that they are not documentaries but stories. These films should lead us to check out the history they use to tell their story. And make sure children don't learn about Russian history, for example, only by watching *Anastasia*.

Peace book wraps and schoolteacher conflict resolution and violence reduction packets are available from the Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee. Book wraps (available in Christian or secular versions for 10 cents each plus shipping) proclaim, "Increase the Peace! Stop the Violence!" and have ideas for peaceful ways to respond to violence and gun safety. Teacher packets, designed for public schools, have ideas and activities for dealing with conflict in the classroom and violence reduction, books lists, curriculum brochures and three curriculum booklets ($8 plus postage). Contact 330-683-6844 or mcpjc@sssnet.com.

Pontius' Puddle

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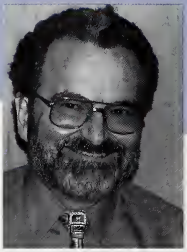

J. Lorne Peachey

That we may be one (4)

How might we handle our disagreements?

For the past three weeks, I've been making the case on this page for preserving the unity of the church, particularly during the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC). I've argued that diversity is a gift from God, that the church can move ahead in diversity if we recognize the gifts of both majority and minority and that integration should not be the occasion to exclude a minority opinion on any issue.

But making cases and mounting arguments will not take away disagreements—disagreements that are strong and emotional, running to the very core of who we are. How do we live with these and still be sisters and brothers in the same church? What are our options?

1. Don't talk about our disagreements. At first thought, this doesn't seem like a very responsible way to operate. Yet we have used it successfully in the past. The current Mennonite Church, for example, disagreed passionately about the issue of clothing and dress in the 1950s and '60s, so passionately there could be little productive discussion about it.

There are many different options available to us to help us work through our disagreements. Most times we do not need to declare people in or out of the fellowship.

True, some congregations left the denomination because they disagreed with how things were going. But the denomination itself did not split and today has come to be tolerant of various expressions in this area.

2. Call a moratorium on discussion and action on a highly charged disagreement. The Church of the Brethren is about to conclude such a moratorium, having agreed at its 1994 annual convention to ask congregations not to bring any resolutions on homosexuality to the conference floor for a period of five years. Meanwhile the Brethren have been praying for Holy Spirit guidance on this issue and on how to proceed once the five-year moratorium is over.

3. Begin a subgroup or an area conference for congregations that have a minority opinion. At least one current MC area conference got its start when congregations that differed from the majority got together for fellowship and mutual support. Eventually this conference became part of the denomination and today works alongside some of the very churches with which it disagreed strongly in the past.

4. Allow each congregation to decide on issues facing the church. We need to remind ourselves of the motto with which the GC church began, according to C. Henry Smith in *Story of the Mennonites:* "Unity in essentials, tolerance in nonessentials and charity in all things."

But this is not just a GC thing. MCs have agreed in the past to let congregations decide their position on such things as divorce and remarriage and the use of women in pastoral leadership. Congregations with differing practices are still part of the denomination and worship, witness and serve together even though they don't agree on these issues.

These are only four of many options—options that have been or are being tried with various degrees of success. There are others we've not yet explored: We could do an in-depth study of an issue that divides us, agreeing beforehand that all will abide by what the Spirit brings us to. We could consult an outside source, asking some person or group to look at our history, our beliefs, our confession of faith and tell us what practice they think is consistent with who we say we are. We could ask all members to declare themselves on an issue and let the majority rule. Or …

The point is that there are many different ways available to help us work through our disagreements. Most times we do not need to push these to the point of declaring people in or out of the fellowship.

Exploring options is hard work, hard work that we can grow weary of doing. That is when we must remember Paul's words from Galatians 6:9-10: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right. … let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith."

For 20th-century Mennonites, with or without merger, doing what is right for the good of the family of faith must include finding Spirit-led ways to work together when we disagree.—*jlp*

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The majority and the minority

The July 21 editorial, "Since It's Highly Unlikely We'll Ever Reach Consensus," was very right in saying that "majority and minority—those are not words we like to hear in the church." I was disappointed, then, when they were used as a model that we might embrace in the face of our discussion and discernment about homosexuality. It seems like when we become impatient or when we are tired of continuing to face difficulties, we end the impasse by saying, "Let's just vote and we'll go with the majority." As Mennonites, we have difficulty dealing with conflict, so any solution is better than living in uncertainty and with feelings of discord.

When Jesus had discussions with the Pharisees, he was in the minority. When a minority of people had a different understanding of the Bible, they refused to accept that the majority was right simply because it was the majority. This minority became the Anabaptists.

In the issue of homosexuality, I'm not even sure who the minority is and who the majority is. I'm not sure it matters. But I do believe that it matters that we are so quick to need resolution that we are willing to revert to popular voting to determine how God is speaking to our hearts. All sides of this issue need the tension and the balance that the other points of view bring. It is why we are called to community; we need a place of accountability, testing, hearing each other's stories and learning to live with those who are different. I can't believe that we need majority rule—no matter who the majority is.—*Debbie Schmidt, Newton, Kan.*

Dealing with differences, diversity

In his article, "Forget the Ecclesiastical Examiners" (Speaking Out, July 14), Robert Hartzler suggests that each congregation should be permitted to form its own standard of conduct and discipline. Obviously, this implies that there is a need for some standard within the church. If it is needed at a congregational level, why is it unnecessary at the denominational level?

Hartzler also declares that there are only minor differences between the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church when it comes to faith issues. The major differences have to do with polity issues. That being the case, it's disappointing for Hartzler to imply that his brothers and sisters who feel differently from him on this polity issue are guilty of "Pharisaism and judgmentalism." I find this type of labeling troubling and inflammatory. Such derogatory words most certainly do not help build unity within a new denomination.—*Nathan Yoder, Lancaster, Pa.*

J. Lorne Peachey's July 14 editorial, "Diversity Is a Gift from God" (July 14), addresses the struggle concerning congregational membership in the new Mennonite Church. Peachey correctly states, "Hartzler takes a strong stand on this issue. Feelings are equally strong on the other side." As I enjoyed reading Hartzler's article, I would also like the opportunity to read the views of one whose feelings are equally strong on the other side. By giving equal space to opposing views, Peachey could give witness to the very title of his editorial. Diversity is a gift from God. Help us find ways to demonstrate and celebrate this reality. —*Randy E. Heacock, Centreville, Va.*

Four more male archetypes

Another book to be added to the plethora on male spiritually ("Masculinity with Integrity," June 16) is *Plumber, Tuba Player, Short-Order Cook, Hockey Scout.* As plumbers men are called to fix the elemental/alimental, not the large, issues of life; as tuba players they are to attempt the aesthetic, even if their skills are not widely appreciated; as short-order cooks they are to be open to providing for needs at any time and not to avoid relationships on the basis that there is no time to make long-term commitments; as hockey scouts they are to identify and nurture giftedness for the Great Entry Draft that is to come.

While not all archetypes are immediately obvious as being derived from Scripture, such lack of canonical rootedness has not kept other books in the genre from wide circulation in the Christian community.—*Vern Ratzlaff, Saskatoon*

Study Scripture, turn from sin

We would like to challenge those who believe we should accept practicing homosexuals into our congregations as members to find even one passage in Scripture that specifically and pointedly teaches that we do this. In fact, an honest study of Scripture will prove otherwise.

Most of us are familiar with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord destroyed these cities because of their wickedness—homosexuality, according to Genesis 19:4-5. In Romans 1:21-32, homosexuality is referred to as unnatural, indecent and perverse, the result of exchanging the truth of God for a lie. In 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, God inspires Paul to teach that we are not even to associate with those

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s say readers say

who call themselves a brother but are sexually immoral. This also includes premarital and extramarital sexual relationships.

We are quite sure that some reading this would label us as homophobic. We want to make our belief clear that although the church needs to take a stand against homosexuality, we are in no way given freedom to hate homosexuals. God calls us to love all people. Sometimes, however, the most loving thing you can do is point out a brother's sin, according to God's Word, with the desire being not to rebuke him, but to turn him from the error of his sin and save him from death.

Homosexuality is not the only sin that requires judgment by the body, but it is one that does need to be addressed. There are a host of sins infiltrating the church, and it's time we begin to deal with them as Scripture teaches so that we can know the blessing of God. He does judge sin and will hold us accountable for our lack of standards.—*Joey and Patti Graber, Marion, S.D.*

Seeking respect

Re. "Judge: Christian Scientist Not Evil" (July 21): I am that Christian Scientist, and I challenge Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church, Lancaster Conference and all Mennonites to heal this situation by correcting their slander and repairing their damage, which I have suffered for 18 years, so that I can recover and be respected by them as their neighbor, even if they do not accept me as a fellow Christian. God is the final judge, and God knows all.
—*Maryfrances Cassell, Mount Joy, Pa.*

Editor's note: Cassell has appealed a judge's ruling that she cannot bring a defamation lawsuit against a preacher at Mount Joy Mennonite Church.

Cover photo
by Howard Zehr,
MCC News Service

U.S., Canadian investment program to benefit stricken Old Colony dairy farmers in Mexico

WINNIPEG—Old Colony Mennonites in Mexico, reeling from a one-two punch of drought and disease, are looking to receive a much-needed boost for a new dairy cooperative, thanks to a group of Mennonite and Amish investors in the United States and Canada.

The $50,000 (U.S.) Cattle Improvement Project is the first major initiative of the Mexico Mennonite Development Loan Fund, established to assemble capital from investors in the United States and Canada to assist the Old Colony Mennonites in Mexico. The fund was created by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, Mennonite Foundation of Canada and Union de Credito, a Mennonite credit union in the city of Cuauhtemoc. The city is sitatuated among the colonies of northern Mexico.

The Old Colony Mennonites have been suffering from economic woes in recent decades. But those problems were compounded when drought parched Mexico from 1993 to 1995, leaving many Old Colony Mennonites with virtually no capital for new investment. The situation worsened this past winter when many farmers—including the poor and landless—were forced to kill or sell large numbers of cattle because of tuberculosis and brucellosis.

The Cattle Improvement Project will provide funds for loans through Union de Credito for farmers to replace dairy cattle lost to disease and for poor Old Colony Mennonites to purchase shares in a 250-cow dairy cooperative now being organized with the help of MCC Canada.

"We're not giving any money, we're just loaning money," says Abe Peters, director of MCC Canada's programs among the colony Mennonite groups, "The saving [to the colony] will come in lower interest rates."

We're not giving any money, we're just loaning money.

—Abe Peters

Several U.S. Amish groups, which have already funded an electrification project in one colony, have also pledged their help. A group of Amish businesspeople visited the Old Colony Mennonites this past winter for a first-hand look at the economic issues. "When the Amish group arrived, they decided they too wanted to assist in this [dairy] program," Peters says. "So they are now collecting money for that purpose."

Mennonite Weekly Review

An employee rakes curds at an Old Colony Mennonite cheese factory near Cuauhtemoc, Mexico. Cheese making has historically been a major Old Colony industry, utilizing the production of colony dairy farms. An investment program of North American Mennonites and Amish will provide loan money for farmers, struggling after years of drought and disease, to acquire cattle in a new dairy cooperative.

About 50 farmers have signed up for the cooperative. "We expect by middle of August they'll have their legal entity formed and they'll have to put their money down," Peters says.

The cooperative is expected to be built in Campo 4, a village in the Manitoba Colony near Cuauhtemoc. MCC Canada staff person Abe Martens is assisting in setting up the dairy. The project is expected to cost $475,000 (U.S.): $325,000 for the cattle and $150,000 for new facilities. The Mexican government is helping pay to replace the cattle lost to tuberculosis and brucellosis—about 9 percent of the cattle in Campo 4, Peters says. Colony herds have since tested negative to the diseases.

The Mexico Mennonite Development Loan Fund already has about $60,000 (U.S.) in both donations and investments—more than is needed for the cooperative cattle project. The extra money will be used for future projects, Peters says. Possibilities include artificial insemination at the cooperative and a watermelon-seed program.

The first Old Colony Mennonites settled in Mexico in 1922, leaving Canada because they saw the government becoming too intrusive, such as requiring educational reforms. There are now 27 colonies in Mexico with a population of about 50,000.*—MCC Canada News Service with Rich Preheim*

Coloradoans help Filipino farm

Filipino Marcelino Pascua has received help from U.S. Mennonites in his effort to save his family farm.

Pascua and his seven siblings were forced to mortgage their farm in order to provide medical care for their seriously ill mother. Pascua is only able to earn enough in the depressed Filipino economy to pay the interest on the loan, and the bank has threatened to foreclose unless the $4,000 principal is paid.

But at a June ice cream party and service auction, Fort Collins (Colo.) Mennonite Fellowship raised $4,290 for Pascua. Congregation member Ruth Pendergrast had met Pascua while serving with Habitat for Humanity in the Philippines in the late 1980s.*—Western District News*

Hong Kong's vision for the harvest

Church-planting event highlights growth

LANCASTER, Pa.—Hong Kong's 1997 switch from British to Chinese control has meant many changes, not the least of which has been felt by the three small Mennonite congregations there. Weekly attendance at all three has increased since the 1997 change, Glenn Kauffman, a pastor at one of the congregations, told a July 13 consultation on international church planting.

"We need time to see if this is the start of a growth curve or a blip in the charts," said Kauffman, an Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) worker. But he added that the congregations are developing a strong vision for the harvest.

Kauffman was one of five presenters at the consultation, held in Lancaster, Pa., sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions. It was attended by church planters, mission workers and church leaders serving in 20 countries. The consultation was part of EMM's annual School for Apostles, a five-day conference for church planters.

Membership in Hong Kong's three Mennonite congregations is about 110. Kauffman noted that only one of the three church plantings was intentional. The other two emerged spontaneously as youth and students came to faith through the witness of Mennonite missionaries.

But the congregations today are intentionally working through small cell groups and reaching out to Hong Kong's minority groups, including new immigrants from mainland China, Filipinos and the homeless. Several homeless people came to faith during the past year through the weekly ministry of Hong Kong Mennonites and an EMM Youth Evangelism Service team.

EMM photo by Dale D. Gehman

Kristina Charles (left) of Millersville, Pa., and Katherine Tomme of Atlanta work together on a craft project during Eastern Mennonite Mission's School for Apostles July 13-17. The girls were two of 70 children who attended with their parents. The school also included a special international consultation on church planting.

"The approach is to begin meeting in worship and prayer with these persons on the streets, rather than making them cross the barriers of coming into a church building," Kauffman said.

"All three local pastors carry a vision for church planting. Thus the next church plant will likely emerge out of a congregation or joint effort of congregations rather than having a lot of missionary initiative leading the way."

The Hong Kong Mennonite congregations have set a goal of 500 members by the time of the next Mennonite World Conference assembly, to be held in 2003. Their efforts are jointly supported EMM and the Commission on Overseas Mission.

In addition to the consultation and teaching sessions, this year's School for Apostles included the first reception for alumni of EMM's Home Ministries department.—*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

MDS extends commitment in Florida as summer fires follow February tornadoes

AKRON, Pa.—Fires aren't strangers to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Neither are tornadoes. But when they happen at the same location only three months apart, that's a different story.

In March, MDS set up a project site in Seminole County, Fla., after four tornadoes hit in late February. Then in May and June, fires ravaged Florida, devastating more than 30 counties, including Seminole. The fires came within one mile of the first house MDS volunteers rebuilt.

"Seldom do we see two disasters at the same location," says MDS executive coordinator Tom Smucker, who toured Seminole County last month. "This is very unique."

MDS has committed itself to rebuilding seven houses destroyed by this summer's fires. That, along with continuing work on three houses destroyed by tornadoes, will keep the project running through March 1999.

The first fire-destroyed house to be rebuilt by MDS will be that of the Corter family, whose members lost all their belongings. All they had left were the clothes on their backs.

"We drove around a cul-de-sac, and fire had hit everything," says Carla Hunt, MDS assistant coordinator. "Swing sets and toys had melted. It was eerie."—*Marisa Doncevic for MCC News Service*

Seldom do we see two disasters at the same location. This is very unique.

—*Tom Smucker*

MBM recognizes two church planters for work among Boston's Chinese

LANCASTER, Pa.—A Chinese woman living in Boston and her late husband have been recognized by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) for church planting among the city's Chinese population.

In a July 12 ceremony, Marie Ho received the 1998 Lark Awark for herself and her husband, Kenson, who died Nov. 18, 1997, at the age of 78. The award is presented annually by MBM to Mennonites who have demonstrated creative leadership in evangelism and church development in North America. The award is named for James Lark, the first African-American bishop in the Mennonite Church, and Rowena, his wife.

The Hos suffered years of persecution, imprisonment, and hard labor in their homeland of China before coming to the United States. But their faith was undeterred, and they always dreamed of what they could do next for the Lord.

"Nothing brought [Kenson] as much joy as when a person received the Lord Jesus Christ," said Wilbert Lind, the Hos' bishop when they started work in Boston in 1984.

The Hos planted Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace. Beginning with two people in 1984, the congregation has grown to about 140 members today. It has already parented another church plant in the Malden community and is looking to new areas.

About 20 people accepted Christ at a local nursing home through Kenson's ministry, and he helped more than 200 people become American citizens.

Even when sick with cancer last year, he told people that if the Lord allowed him to live longer, he wanted to plant another church in Massachusetts and one in Australia. "Kenson devoted his life to love the Lord faithfully," Marie Ho said.—*Carol L. Wert for MBM and EMM news services*

Dale D. Gehman

John Powell, Mennonite Board of Missions director of evangelism and church development, presents the 1998 Lark Award to Marie Ho for her and her late husband's church-planting work in the Chinese community of Boston. Kenson Ho died in November 1997.

Canadian youth move on merger

The merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church is taking another step in Alberta, where youth from the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta and from Northwest Conference are preparing to create a new integrated youth organization.

A youth leadership team with representatives from both conferences met in June to draft a constitution and organizational structure. Their work will be presented for approval at a leadership retreat in September. —*Canadian Mennonite*

MEDA chapter provides 'safe place'

We want groups to ... become a safe place to share business and personal problems.

—*Ken Byler*

WINNIPEG—A new approach to business networking has been created to promote values-centered leadership among Christian businesspeople in eastern Pennsylvania.

The Clayton Kratz Fellowship, a Souderton, Pa.-based chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), is sponsoring four new "affinity groups" to help business leaders deal with faith-marketplace dilemmas.

"We're responding to a real need," says Ken Byler, secretary of the chapter's board of directors and coordinator for the new program. "Our vision is to connect business leaders with each other to share concerns and find support."

The affinity groups, which started meeting two months ago, are organized by topic and career areas: faith in business, finance and investment, and mentoring/entrepreneurship. The latter is divided into a group for business owners and one for business managers.

"Each affinity group will write a focus statement and set their own meeting schedule," Byler says. "We want groups to develop an identity and become a safe place to share business and personal problems."

Facilitators are responsible for organizing meeting schedules and promoting discussion. The groups meet together once every quarter for informal networking, inspiration and prayer.

About 20 people are now participating, but Byler says the goal is to have 200 by the end of next year. The program is open to any Christian in business.—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

Educating Christians, Muslims

MCCer in school setting works to break stereotypes

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Yasir Makki is helping bring a new kind of knowledge to the halls of higher learning at Ohio State University. As a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) service intern with International Friendships Inc. (IFI), Makki works among the university's international students, building relationships and sharing his faith to help dismantle stereotypes that often exist between Muslims and Christians.

A Muslim-born Christian from Sudan, Makki brings needed skills to IFI, a nondenominational organization seeking to share the gospel with the university's 5,000 international students. Five hundred of these are Muslims from the Arabic-speaking world, students with whom Makki shares the same language and culture.

His duties with IFI range from finding temporary housing for international students when they first arrive at Ohio State to leading a weekly Bible study. Three hundred students participate in IFI. First-year participants meet for an instructional overview of the Bible and learn about the life and teachings of Christ.

Aside from his formal duties at IFI, Makki regards building friendships with students as a high priority. "Until recently, Muslim students have been ignored by Christian groups on campus because of the stereotypes Christians have of Muslims," he says. "But there are more similarities than differences between Christianity and Islam."

This is a message he shares with adherents of both faiths. Among Muslims, Makki prefers to call himself a "follower of Jesus" rather than a Christian. For many Muslims, he says, the word Christian is "taboo because of the Crusades. People didn't forget that piece of history, and many fear it will happen again."

Muslims are often surprised to find that Christians worship one God, not three. "I have friends who are willing to be open and learn," Makki says. "This is very encouraging."

He believes Christians also need to learn more about Islam. "The media's stereotype of Muslims is always connected with terrorism," says Makki, a member of United Bethel Mennonite Church of Rosedale, Ohio.

He came to the United States in February 1996 to attend Rosedale Bible Institute in Irwin, Ohio, for two years. During the summers, he participated in two MCC service internships, working with an Arabic Mennonite church in Philadelphia and at Peabody Street Mennonite Church in Washington. Still looking for opportunities to express his faith, Makki started this, his third MCC internship, in January.

MCC's Service Internship Program is designed for young people of African, Asian and Hispanic descent and provides opportunities for them to work in their home communities with Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations for one year.

Makki graduated from Omdurman Ahlya University in Sudan, where he studied English-Arabic translation. In addition to working with IFI, he is taking graduate courses in social work and community development. "I believe that will enable me to work with displaced people in my own country," he says, referring to Sudan's 42-year civil war.

When asked what he plans to do after his one-year term ends in December, Makki laughs and says, "We do not plan as far ahead as you do here." But he is considering staying for another year at IFI.—*Delphine Martin for MCC News Service*

There are more similarities than differences between Christianity and Islam.

—Yasir Makki

CPT workers allowed to remain in Mexico

CHICAGO—Following a three-hour interrogation by Mexican immigration officials on July 27, two Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) members have been allowed to remain in the country. Pierre Gingerich and Clif Kindy are part of CPT's delegation in the volatile southern Mexican state of Chiapas.

Gingerich, Kindy and a third CPT member, Lynn Stoltzfus, were stopped July 22 at a military checkpoint as they were returning to San Cristobal after attending a worship service in Acteal, a refugee camp. Gingerich and Kindy were issued citations to appear at the July 27 hearing. Stoltzfus was not issued a citation. Such hearings have resulted in the expulsion of foreigners or restrictions on their visas.

But immigration officials ruled that Gingerich and Kindy's presence in Chiapas fell within the bounds of their tourist visas. No new restrictions were placed on them.

According to Kindy, the officer in charge of the hearing had five or more faxes on his desk. He told the CPT members, "You have some pretty good friends," referring to supporters and government representatives who had sent the faxes or otherwise inquired into the case.—*CPT News Service*

Correction: The Pacific Southwest Conference annual assembly was held at Iglesia Evangelica Bethel in Fullerton, Calif. The congregation's location was incorrect in the July 14 issue of *The Mennonite*.

Simplicity isn't simple

by Jamie Mitchell Molitoris

Many of you who are parents may know about the McDonald's Teenie Beanie Baby craze. If your children are older, perhaps you remember the Cabbage Patch dolls or Power Ranger phenomenon. It was in the midst of the recent Teenie Beanie Baby blitz that I realized just how much of a challenge it is to live simply in the age of advertising.

I'm told the Teenie Beanie craze was magnified in the Washington area. This should not be surprising in an area that boasts the highest per capita number of cars driving around with a bumper sticker proclaiming, "He who dies with the most toys wins." It never occurred to me that people took that slogan seriously until I saw what happened with the Teenie Beanie Babies.

I suddenly felt as though my children were lacking because they would not have the complete set of Teenie Beanie Babies.

I had stopped by a McDonald's with my 2-year-old after a morning running errands during "week two" of the Teenie Beanie Baby campaign. We sat down close enough to the cash register for me to hear patron conversations with the clerk.

The first conversation I overheard was a woman negotiating with the manager for a different Teenie Beanie Baby than the one she received in the Happy Meal bag emblazoned with the words, "Collect them all." The customer became increasingly agitated as she explained that her teenage daughter had almost the whole collection and needed Seymour or Liz (Teenie Beanie Babies that this restaurant offered) to complete it. Eventually the manager opened a new case of the toys and the woman, clutching her prizes, gleefully left. The next woman bought two Happy Meals, then bought eight additional Teenie Beanie Babies—the limit allowed—and explained that she was going to throw away the food; she only needed the toys. Almost every patron had a similar story.

You may wonder what this has to do with simplicity. After all, I only entered this McDonald's because it was convenient, purchased only two Happy Meals, had planned to eat all the food and had no intention of buying additional Beanie Babies. What struck me about the whole experience, though, was how close I got to the edge of my seat as these conversations progressed. I suddenly felt as though my children were lacking because they would not have the complete set of Teenie Beanie Babies. Somehow I was not providing for my children because I was not out actively seeking Platy the Platypus (apparently a scarce treasure). I was swept up in a frenzy that held no interest for me and that I did not condone, yet the tide was threatening to carry me right along.

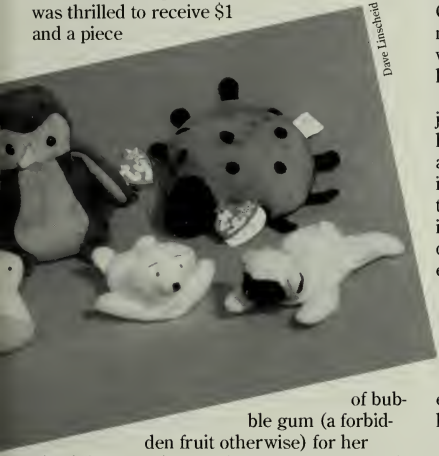
If I didn't have children I wouldn't even have been in a McDonald's that day and would not have questioned my sanity as I willed myself to stay in my seat and not join in the frantic quest for Teenie Beanie Babies. But I do have two small children; they have a different idea about life and the need for social interaction from mine, so we do the best we can and try to live as simply as possible, despite all the marketing attempts to pull us in another direction.

Where do children, or adults for that matter, learn that there are certain "must have" items? We don't have cable at our house though we do have rabbit ears that allow us to receive a snowy version of the major networks and PBS. We rarely enter that den of temptation, Toys R Us, and I try to teach my children that material things are fleeting and of little importance. Unfortunately we don't live on a mountain, and as I learned at McDonald's that day, my kids have to filter through a lot of other temptations that beckon them to buy, buy, buy. For example, despite my steadfast rule that there be no Power Rangers in our home, after two weeks of preschool my daughter knew the names of all the Power Rangers as well as their trademark expression, "Time to morph," complemented by the accompanying flying karate leap.

As parents interested in teaching our children the beauty of simplicity, the best approach is consistent application of a form of tough love. When it might be easier to just give in and buy every Teenie Beanie Baby or Power Ranger in sight, it might be better to stand back and think about what is best in the long run for our children. In his book *A Better World for Our Small Children*, Benjamin Spock states: "The fabric of society is unraveling. We are afflicted by ills ranging from excessive competitiveness and materialism to a widening gap between the rich and the poor. In short, we have abandoned our standards and our children are suffering." He suggests that we "inject a large dose of spirituality into our lives" to get back on the right track.

How do we even begin to try competing with an advertising age that teaches children that acquisition is the key to success? Simplicity must begin in the home. Where do we start? Here are a few suggestions that have provided a good foundation in our family.

Birthdays are a simple event at our house: lots of fanfare and love for the celebrated, but one gift and a simple gathering of friends. We've never done anything different, so my older daughter is happy with this arrangement, provided she can invite her best friends, a small gathering of about 50 kids. She has a friend at meeting (church), Sara, who was thrilled to receive $1 and a piece of bubble gum (a forbidden fruit otherwise) for her birthday. How beautiful to see Sara's excited face at the simplest of gifts. And how wonderful for my daughter to understand that this seemingly insignificant gift had made Sara so happy.



Dave Linscheid

When my children give a gift, rather than giving them money to go out and buy it, we pull out the art supplies and make something. We have yet to receive a disparaging remark from any of the recipients. In fact, I've had parents ask me, "What is your secret?"

The only time I run into questions about our approach to birthdays is when my 6-year-old has attended a party where the parents have hired everything from the clown to the person who cuts the cake. Generally, a rather lengthy discussion of how much fun we had on her last birthday without all the hoopla is necessary to bring her around. At these times I'm reminded of how difficult it can be to live simply when there are so many outside influences with which to contend.

Christmas is a time to remember how truly special it is to live simply. The soft flickering candlelit peace of the meetinghouse on Christmas Eve creates a feeling beyond compare. On the other hand, overcoming the "mile-long wish list" and convincing children that giving truly is better than receiving suggests a new challenge in strategic negotiating.

One thing that makes my task easier around Christmastime is the reduced influence of TV. Since my children don't watch Nickelodeon or any of the other stations marketing directly to children, they aren't bombarded with advertisements for the perfect toy around the holidays. Since we live on a cul-de-sac rather than a mountain, we do, however, receive all the toy catalogs that provide plenty of stimulation for a long, long wish list. Again, despite parental internal battles that suggest that one Christmas of extravagance might be fun and not do any real harm to my children, I stick with one or two gifts and lots of love and fellowship.

It's important to remind our children that joy and appreciation are found within. If we look only at the material value of a gift, we will always be disappointed. I've started encouraging my older daughter to look into the eyes of the one giving a gift; there lies the true meaning and joy of simple giving. My younger daughter is 2 and is now beginning to discover the true joy of giving. Yesterday, on a walk outdoors, she picked the top from a dandelion and lovingly presented it to her 6-year-old sister. I could see my older daughter pause for a second, ready to throw it on the ground, but then she looked into her younger sister's eyes and leaned over and gave her a heartfelt hug. In my eyes were tears of joy.

Recently, when I asked my older daughter what she would like to have for her birthday, she said, "I don't know Mom—how about a hug and a pizza." It's moments like these that remind me that I'm not depriving my children when I opt not to go to every McDonald's in a five-mile radius in search of the last Teenie Beanie Baby to complete my children's collection. They will not, in fact, go on *Oprah* as adults claiming child abuse because I didn't hire clowns for their birthday parties. What they will do, I hope, is go on to become loving people who look deep into themselves and the eyes of others. Then they will be grateful for the simple gifts and love of family.

Jamie Mitchell Molitoris is an adjunct professor of English with Averett College and a freelance editor and writer. This article first appeared in Friends Journal, *February 1998.*

28 secrets to happiness

1. Live beneath your means and within your seams.
2. Return everything you borrow.
3. Donate blood.
4. Stop blaming others.
5. Admit it when you make a mistake.
6. Give all the clothes you haven't worn in the last three years to charity.
7. Every day do something nice and try not to get caught.
8. Listen more; talk less.
9. Every day take a 30-minute walk in your neighborhood.
10. Skip two meals a week and give the money to the homeless.
11. Strive for excellence, not perfection.
12. Be on time.
13. Don't make excuses.
14. Don't argue.
15. Get organized.
16. Be kind to kind people.
17. Be even kinder to unkind people.
18. Let someone cut ahead of you in line.
19. Take time to be alone.
20. Reread a favorite book.
21. Cultivate good manners.
22. Be humble.
23. Understand and accept that life isn't always fair.
24. Know when to say something.
25. Know when to keep your mouth shut.
26. Don't criticize anyone for 24 hours.
27. Learn from the past, plan for the future and live in the present.
28. Don't sweat the small stuff.

—*from* The Simple Living Guide *by Janet Luhrs (Broadway Books, 1997)*

Say no in order to say yes

by Rod Stafford

For our yes to be authentic, we must learn to say no: no to whatever disconnects us from God, to whatever distracts us from following Jesus, to whatever detaches us from the community of the Spirit.

One of our challenges as parents is letting our children learn to say no. It is not so difficult for them. Between age 1 and 3, most children become fluent in the language of no. But it is hard for me.

No can be a hard word to hear. Most often I want my children to do what I say, choose what I choose and follow where I lead. But that doesn't happen. And I am learning that that is a good thing. Molly, my wife, who is a parent educator, helps me understand that it is important for children to learn to say no in healthy ways, as part of their development.

The writer of Ecclesiastes, Qoheleth, knew this. He knew that in a world full of opportunities, demands and possibilities, it is important for us to learn to say no in healthy ways, as part of our development into whole people. Only then does yes become meaningful.

Ecclesiastes was written about 300 years before Christ. The people of Israel, after centuries of war, exile and rebuilding, had settled into a period of relative peace. Free of constant threats, they had begun to prosper. Life was good and safe, not unlike our own.

And, like our own, people's faith suffered from such affluence. Distracted by multiple choices, people grew distant from Yahweh. We can imagine the Hebrew's equivalent of our Daytimers, full of business meetings, social engagements and to-do lists, with little time left for the rigors of a daily life with God.

Writing in such a setting, Qoheleth challenges the assumptions of his culture and ours. Whether lavish indulgence ("I built houses and planted vineyards … whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them") or disengaged apathy ("What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil … there is nothing new under the sun"), he comes to the same conclusion: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." (See Ecclesiastes 1-2.)

To everything that we substitute for God—human wisdom, human pleasure, human religion—Qoheleth answers with an unrelenting no. It is a blunt no, meant to make possible an authentic yes. Georges Bernanos echoes this theme: "In order to be prepared to hope in what does not deceive, we must first lose hope in everything that does deceive."

The no of Qoheleth at the end of the Old Testament prepares us for the yes of Christ in the New Testament. Paul writes, "For in him every one of God's promises is a yes. For this reason it is through him that we say amen, to the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Amen, of course, means yes in Hebrew. It speaks of firmness and certainty, of "what does not deceive." God is Amen (Isaiah 65:16). And because God has said yes to us, we can in turn say yes to Christ and live in the sure truth of God's saving grace.

But for our yes to be authentic, we must learn to say no: no to whatever disconnects us from God, to whatever distracts us from following Jesus, to whatever detaches us from the community of the Spirit.

This means saying no to all the obvious things we've been warned about since Sunday school. But it also means saying no to some of the good things we've been taught to pursue: perhaps to career advancement when it threatens to swallow up our primary relationships, to community volunteering when it threatens to monopolize our time with committee meetings and action groups, even to church work when it threatens to distance us from the One in whose name we gather.

To be healthy, faithful people, to say yes to God's yes, we must learn to say no.

It's a hard word for me to hear as a parent, and it's a hard response for me to hear as a pastor. I want people to do what I say, choose what I choose and follow where I lead. The church works most efficiently and grows most successfully when people say yes. No doesn't always sit well.

When a member tells me she is downsizing her work and taking a three-day-a-week job, I worry about the church budget. When our best community organizer tells me she is resigning from the victim-offender reconciliation program board to create a less hectic and healthier schedule, I wonder who will pick up the work. When a worship committee member declines to take on a special project so he won't become resentful, I secretly wish he wouldn't mind just a little resentment.

No is hard to hear but important for us to say. T.S. Eliot, in his poem "Ash Wednesday," prays, "Teach us to care and not to care." They go together. To care about our daily life with God, to care about being God's people and doing God's will, we must learn not to care about the petty things and the important things, the destructive things and even the good things that distract us and distance us from God.

We must learn to say no. Then we can faithfully and authentically say yes to God. Amen.

Rod Stafford is pastor at Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, Kan.

Porch swing philosophy

by Louise Carroll

The wide porch wrapped around two sides of the old farmhouse like a loving embrace. The side of the porch in what we called the back of the house was the cool, quiet part of the porch. Some old wooden rockers and the porch swing were there.

A big gnarled pear tree grew near and shaded it, lending it quiet and privacy, all the best things to have with a porch swing.

Open to the breezes and smells of the outdoors, it was the ideal place to sit and hold the baby. The movement soothed both the baby and the adult.

The porch swing was the perfect place to sit and think. It calmed the mind, refreshed the spirit. It was also good for circulation because even when we were tired and aching the gentle movement made us feel better.

The swing could lull anxious thoughts and was a marvelous aid to daydreaming. It was a place to sit and share your day with another or plan and pray alone. It was a fine place to think pleasant thoughts about yesterday and to think hopefully of tomorrow.

The swing was big enough for three and sometimes four young ones. We talked and laughed as we moved in harmony. It was a place to hum tunes and tell funny stories.

For two people who had had a disagreement the porch swing was the perfect place. It was hard to stay angry as you moved back and forth in unison. It was easier to talk to each other side-by-side in a quiet place.

If you were being courted (as it used to be called), you sat on the porch swing with your beau. It was good etiquette for the young lady to keep her feet off the floor and let the young man control the swing's movements.

We sat on that old swing and talked, shared our hopes and worries. We studied there and sometimes all alone there we dreamed. It was the place we learned porch swing philosophy.

Porch swing philosophy was simple—life had its ups and downs, just like the swing. Grandma didn't expect things to be good all the time or bad all the time. She was calm in the good times and the bad times because things always changed. After all, God was in charge and knew what was best. We went back and forth in life just as we went back and forth on the swing, safe and secure. Just as the swing was anchored to the porch ceiling, we were anchored by our faith in the Lord.

Marilyn Nolt

On that porch swing we were free to listen for the crickets and watch the fireflies. We were free to hear the wild birds sing and to feel the hot August wind on our faces. We were free to love, and so it is with our lives.

In life we are free to enjoy the beauties of nature, appreciate our neighbor and love others, as God would have us do. In the bad times we can look forward to the good times, and in the good times we know we will be safe in the bad times—the ups and downs of life.

Porch swing philosophy was good thinking then and is good thinking now. Back and forth, up and down.

Louise Carroll lives in Wampum, Pa.

> **We went back and forth in life just as we went back and forth on the swing, safe and secure. Just as the swing was anchored to the porch ceiling, we were anchored by our faith in the Lord.**

Canadian group to consider women in leadership

Canada's Evangelical Mennonite Conference (EMC) has embarked on a one-year study of women in leadership following a request to license a woman so she can officiate at weddings.

Ardith Frey is pastor of Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church in Winnipeg but is not licensed or ordained. The conference has not previously licensed or ordained a woman.

The request for Frey's licensure and the issue of women in leadership was discussed at the EMC annual convention last month, resulting in the delegates' decision to study the matter for a year.—*The Messenger*

Three colleges report record giving

Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., Hesston (Kan.) College and Goshen (Ind.) College all posted records for contributions for their recently completed fiscal years.

Bethel received an all-time high of $5.5 million in gifts for 1997-98, largely on the strength of a $2.5 million gift from the estate of Katherine Esau, a noted expert on plant anatomy who died last year in Santa Barbara, Calif. Bethel also saw giving by alumni jump 76 percent. Giving to Hesston's annual fund in 1997-98 topped $1 million for the first time, reaching $1.08 million. Goshen received $5.63 million in deferred giving last fiscal year. The total, which includes gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, exceeded the combined total for the previous three years.

Oldest congregation gets $25,000 grant

PHILADELPHIA—Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, has received a $25,000 grant from the charitable arm of Mennonite Men for improvements to its meetinghouse.

The grant comes from Mennonite Men's Tenth Man program, which supports congregations building or improving their church buildings. Germantown is refurbishing the building in which it has met since 1994, two blocks from the site of the congregation's original location. Germantown is the oldest Mennonite congregation in North America. —*GCMC News Service*

Ohio relief sale nets $220,000

KIDRON, Ohio—The 33rd annual Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale on Aug. 1 capitalized on current trends as an auction of Beanie Babies brought $2,300, helping the sale post receipts of $220,000 to benefit Mennonite Central Committee.

A Steiner tractor was sold for $10,500, and the wood auction was up nearly $9,000. A tea cart brought a winning bid of $2,500, and the highest-selling quilt went for $2,200.

Mennonite center continues in Moscow

MOSCOW—Representatives of the three agencies sponsoring the Moscow Mennonite Center recently met to refine the center's work. Created in 1996 by Mennonite Central Committee, Commission on Overseas Mission and MBMS International, the North American Mennonite Brethren mission agency, the center's purposes include developing ties with Mennonite-related groups in the former Soviet Union, providing Anabaptist theological resources and nurturing ties with the wider church.—*MCC and GCMC news services*

In the camera eye

Michael Stellingwerf, holding a child from Nueva Vida/Norristown (Pa.) New Life Mennonite Church, is interviewed by a film crew from the National Council of Churches for a documentary on racism to be distributed to ABC TV network affiliates. Stellingwerf is a member of the Service Adventure unit sponsored by the congregation, which was created in 1990 by the joining of Hispanic, African-American and white congregations.

MBM photo by Paul Brubaker

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Events

Indiana Mennonite Women's Missionary Rally, Oct. 8, Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.
Charlottesville (Va.) Mennonite Church 40th anniversary celebration, Oct. 10-11. Contact: 804-296-5289.
Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa., centennial celebration, Oct. 10-11. Contact: Sanford King, 717-935-2783 or www.geocities.com/heartland/8971/.

Workers

Aguilar, Lupe, Brownsville, Texas, is beginning a Mennonite Central Committee assignment as MCC Central States Southern Tier liaison.
Beach, Mark, Lancaster, Pa., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Akron, Pa., as a video producer for MCC.
Doncevic, Marisa, Akron, Pa., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment as an administrative assistant for Mennonite Disaster Service.
Glick, Bruce, Millersburg, Ohio, is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Kidron, Ohio, as connecting-peoples animator.
Smith, Duncan, has been named missions minister for Pacific Northwest Conference.
Sommers, Hannah and Anthony Yoder, Goshen, Ind., are beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in China, teaching English.
Sommers, John, Hartville, Ohio, is beginning a three-year MCC assignment in Vietnam, teaching English as a second language.
Yoder, Rebeca, Stevens, Pa., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Akron, Pa., as MCC U.S. immigration staff associate.

Births

Baker, Rebekah Lynn, June 17, to Kia (Connelly) and Rob Baker, Philadelphia.
Braun, Leslie Anne, July 15, to Gary and Lavonne (Smith) Braun, Henderson, Neb.
Chlebeck, Josiah Robert, July 12, to Janet (Olson) and Rob Chlebeck, South Bend, Ind.
Good, David Allen, July 14, to Denise (Eberly) and Larry Good, Souderton, Pa.
Goshow, Emily Louise, July 15, to Beth (Reid) and Brian Goshow, Souderton, Pa.
Holaway, Paul Colin, July 6, to Brent and Kathy (Kubasiak) Holaway, Osceola, Ind.
Jantzi, Aaron Steven Ralph, July 9, to Faye (Leis) and Steve Jantzi, Wellesley, Ont.
Lantz, Jessica Grace, June 28, to Pamela (Smoker) and Tom Lantz, Albuquerque, N.M.
Lee, Julia Erin, June 2, to Jaime and Laura (Kuepfer) Lee, Kitchener, Ont.
Limas, Nicolas Robert, July 6, to Chris and Mary Beth (Wayner) Limas, Chicago Heights, Ill.
Miller, Elizabeth Kate, July 20, to Eric and Marla (Gasho) Miller, Wauseon, Ohio.
Miller, Emily Jane, July 5, to Kenton and Margie (Broni) Miller, Goshen, Ind.
Reese, Kalina Janae, June 20, to Julie (Ramer) and Mick Reese, Maytown, Pa.
Rhoade, Amanda Christine, July 17, to Joan (Stichter) and Randy Rhoade, Goshen, Ind.
Schumacher, Joseph Mark P., April 3, 1997, received for adoption July 14, 1998, by Janet (Porzelius) and Tim Schumacher, Pandora, Ohio.
Stoner, Matthew Vincent Gingerich, July 16, to André Gingerich and Cathy Stoner, South Bend, Ind.
Zuercher, Benjamin Elliott, July 5, to Andrea (Clemens) and Ian Zuercher, Goshen, Ind.

Marriages

Arnold/Miller: Kristen Arnold, Uniontown, Ohio, and Shawn Miller, Lakemore, Ohio, June 26, by Myron Weaver.
Benner/Huggins: Diane Benner, Richfield, Pa., and Jeff Huggins, Liverpool, Pa., May 30, by Robert Gray.

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Ed Bontrager, evangelism and peace minister for MBCM and pastor of Huntingdon Mennonite Church, Newport News, Virginia

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Benner/Taylor: Donna Benner, Richfield, Pa., and Alan Taylor, Newport, Pa., June 13, by Terry Sheaffer.
Bottorf/Dick: Candace Bottorf, Sutton, Neb., and Jamie Dick, Henderson, Neb., July 11, by Bill Jardine.
Butterworth/Seitz: Richard Butterworth, Falls Church, Va., and Janelle Seitz, Arlington, Va., June 27, by Philip Kreider.
Cherney/Siemens: Melissa Cherney, Concordia, Kan., and Blair Siemens, Buhler, Kan., June 6, by Robert Dalke.
Dewey/Roth: Leslie Dewey, South Bend, Ind., and Loren Roth Jr., South Bend, July 4, by Keith Zehr.
Diener/Eastman: Daniel Diener, Dallas, Texas, and Deborah Eastman, Dallas, June 6, by David Whiteman.
Flaming/Nolan: Stacy Flaming, Newton, Kan., and Tim Nolan, Hutchinson, Kan., June 20, by Perry Nolan.
Fetter/Nafziger: Jamie Fetter, Grover Hill, Ohio, and Stephanie Nafziger, Pettisville, Ohio, June 27, by Jack Fetter and Wayne Pipkin.
Friesen/Smith: Leeann Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Adam Smith, Sargent, Neb., June 27, by Weldon Martens.
Fuller/Ryder: Esta Fuller, Orrville, Ohio, and Andrew Ryder, Orrville, June 20, by Terry Shue.
Goerzen/Poindexter: Paul Goerzen, Newton, Kan., and Misty Poindexter, McPherson, Kan., May 30, by Paul Brunner.
King/Knight: Kelsey King, Lebanon, Ore., and Zach Knight, Lebanon, June 27, by Brent Kauffman.
LaPerle/Weber: Jeremy LaPerle, Albany, Ore., and Heidi Weber, Albany, June 11, by Brent Kauffman.
McDonald/Walters: Rebecca McDonald, London, Ont., and James Walters, Atwood, Ont., May 23, by Paul Dailey and Glenn Zehr.
Neuenschwander/Rutt: Gary Neuenschwander, Smithville, Ohio, and Lynette Smucker Rutt, Smithville, May 9, by Richard Ross.
Short/Waidelich: Lawrence Short, Archbold, Ohio, and Doris Waidelich, Archbold, July 19, by Ross Goldfus.
Smith/Yoder: Joy Smith, Monument, Colo., and Derek Yoder, Henderson, Neb., July 25, by Joel Schroeder.
Sommers/Steiner: Gary Sommers, Hartville, Ohio, and Charla Steiner, Kidron, Ohio, July 18, by Elvin Sommers.
Thomas/Thomas: Darla Thomas, South Bend, Ind., and Mark Thomas, South Bend, July 18, by Janice Yordy Sutter and David Sutter.
Wolf/Zuercher: Kevin Wolf, Ohio, and Tara Zuercher, Orrville, Ohio, June 27, by Terry Shue.

Deaths

Bontrager, Jonas, 96, Louisville, Ohio, died July 5 of heart problems. Burial: July 7 at Hartville, Ohio, by Melvin Leidig.
Geiser, Irvin L., Kidron, Ohio, died June 15. Survivors: wife, Idella; children Mary Cross, Martha Gilbert, Harold, Suzanne Welfley, Charles, Donald, Dorothy Yutzy, Curtis, Carol Miller; 25 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Burial: June 19 at Kidron, by Delmar Falb and Fred Augsburger.
Goertzen, Franklin, 65, Goessel, Kan., died July 1 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Eleanora; children Patty Seibel, Vicki, David; three grandchildren. Burial: July 4 at Newton, Kan., by Paul and Grace Brunner.
Groff, Ira, 86, New Danville, Pa., died July 13. Survivors: wife, Lillian; children Robert, Ira, Donald, Harold, Richard; 14 grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 17 at New Providence, Pa., by David Thomas and Nathan Yoder.
Hershberger, Florence Burkey, 78, Canby, Ore., died July 17 of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Survivors: husband, Sterling; children Ken, Steve, Shirley Stauffer, Sharon Stutzman; 16 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 21 at Hubbard, Ore., by Richard Regier.

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Contact: Search Committee, c/o Peter Hildebrand, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; 204-324-8317; email aaront@mb.sympatico.ca.

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Are we turning the Bible into a graven image?

by Bradley Siebert

Within the Mennonite church today there is a division. One group accepts the confession of faith's description of "the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life." Others want it to describe the Bible as "infallible."

Controversy over scriptural authority is not new. In fact, it's biblical. Jesus was confronted with it. The Gospels tell stories of scribes and Pharisees trying to trick Jesus into heresy.

Jesus said he came not to abolish but to fulfill the Law and Prophets (Matthew 5:17). Nevertheless, Jesus goes on, several times saying, "You have heard that it was said, … but I say … " (Matthew 5:21-48).

And Jesus summarized the Law and Prophets in the commandments to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40), doubtless "erasing" scriptural details many thought vital.

The apostles also struggled with the issue. Like the writers of Hebrews (5:2) and of 1 Peter (2:2), Paul scolds his readers for being spiritual infants, still needing milk, not yet ready for solid food (1 Corinthians 3:2).

As an alternative to "infallibility," I am pleased with the descriptive language of *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, including the terms "fully reliable" and "trustworthy." Most compelling, however, is the statement that further describes the Bible as "the essential book of the church." We can't get along without it.

It is the inspired witness to God's work in history up to and through the time of the Word's own coming in human form, Emmanuel, God with us. The Bible represents God's efforts to get humanity straightened out.

But for some reason we need two creation stories (Genesis 1:1-2; 3 and 2:4-25) and two histories of the kings (the first is 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings, and the second is 1 and 2 Chronicles). If either were complete, why would we need the other? If each is incomplete, is it infallible?

The Gospels give us four perspectives on Jesus, none of them seemingly complete. Are four perspectives even adequate to convey the significance of Jesus' life and ministry in the continuing life of the church? Even those who knew Jesus seem to have had trouble fulfilling this in their day. We face the same challenge.

So I am uncomfortable with the idea of biblical infallibility. But by saying this, I don't mean that the Bible is false or deceptive. Scripture's account of salvation history up to its climax gives us vision for what we should be about, with God's help.

I worry, however, that the talk of biblical infallibility may amount to idolatry. Are we turning the Bible into a graven image?

We see through a glass—the lens of language in the Bible's case—dimly. As Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 13:12), we must be content with a promise of full knowledge.

I freely confess God to be infallible. I hesitate to confess that the Bible conveys the infinite God fully, even while I confess the Bible to be inspired. The Bible begins and ends. It must be finite, partial.

I also worry that talk of infallibility tempts us to self-righteousness. A text incapable of error would seem incapable of leading to error. What I grasp of the Scripture becomes absolute Truth, then, by which I can live without question. Rather than living by faith, I can live with the certainty that I have grasped the mind of God. And I can grasp my absolute Truth like a weapon against dissenters.

But even Moses was told not to look directly as God passed. Paul was blinded by his vision on the road to Damascus. Such stories suggest that humans can't fully comprehend God. We see through a glass—the lens of language in the Bible's case—dimly. As Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 13:12), we must be content with a promise of full knowledge.

How then can we stand, and where? We can humbly stand by faith with each other's and with the Spirit's help, as parts of the body of which Christ is the head. The God who inspired the biblical writers is still with us, inspiring our readings and our collective, albeit partial, discernment.

Bradley Siebert is an assistant professor of English at Washburn University and a member of Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan. Reprinted with permission from Mennonite Weekly Review.

We believe all Scripture is inspired by God through the Holy Spirit for instruction in salvation and training in righteousness. We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life. We seek to understand and interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ as we are led by the Holy Spirit in the church.—*from Article 4 of* Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective

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Gordon Houser

Stop in the name of love

Simplify, simplify.
—Henry David Thoreau

Simplicity is big business. Go to a large bookstore and you'll find dozens of titles. And there seems to be a yearning among many for a less hectic, simpler lifestyle. While this may be one more example of individualism run amok, it's not all bad. After all, simplicity is at the heart of the gospel.

Jesus said that the entire law is summed up in the Great Commandment, to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength," then added a second, to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30,31).

Simplicity helps us love more fully. When our heart, soul, mind or strength is divided by other pursuits, then our love is hindered. Too many things distract us from loving another. And love is perhaps most hindered by self-interest, which is the hallmark of our culture.

Newspaper columnist Leonard Pitts writes: "Our culture celebrates acquisition, treats self-interest as the only interest that matters. We live, most of us, in a state of having plenty and wanting more."

Simplicity helps us love more fully. When our heart is divided by other pursuits, then our love is hindered.

Unfortunately, this not only describes our culture, the wider society, but too often also applies to the church, to Christians. We acquire many things we don't need (and that "we" includes me), and we get caught up in rushing from one activity to another without taking time to be still and be with others.

A recent sermon at my church discussed the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). The preacher pointed out that while Martha is doing what is expected in her culture, Jesus commends Mary for doing the "one thing" necessary. When Martha complains that Mary has "left me to do all the work," the text uses two Greek words, one meaning "left everything." This word is the same one Jesus uses when he calls his followers to "leave everything and follow me."

While hospitality is important, and certain work must be done, we are called primarily not to be like Martha, who "was distracted by her many tasks," but to be like Mary, "who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying."

We may want to emulate Mary, but our culture, and even our church, does not affirm such behavior. As soon as you try to slow down, take more time to just be, both an internal voice and external voices call what you're doing into question.

When I went from full-time work to four-fifths-time work, I felt both an internal and external pressure to be productive in that one-fifth-time. In our culture and our church, you're not a person if you're not productive. Yet the Great Commandment Jesus quotes says nothing about producing anything.

A friend of mine models simplicity in her typically quiet, humble way. Several years ago, she and her husband agreed that they would live on his income. A successful, capable professional, she quit her stressful job to be at home with their elementary-age daughter. She volunteers at church and in the community, helps her elderly mother and is there when her daughter comes home from school. She cares for the home, reads, visits with friends, prays. She has few possessions; their house is one of the more uncluttered I've seen.

Most importantly, though, she exudes love. When you speak with her, she gives her attention fully, and you come away feeling cared for. She lives simply, but it never feels like a burden. Instead it brings her joy. She loves to get rid of things, to give to others. And while she exemplifies simple living, she doesn't preach it. I never feel judged by her, though I feel challenged by her example.

Whether we resist our culture's obsession with unnecessary toys (page 8), learn to say no to the distractions of a busy schedule (page 10) or take time to sit on a porch swing and simply be (page 11), we will face obstacles. We will encounter internal and external pressures to live fast, be more productive. But Jesus calls us to stop our acquisitiveness and our busyness and do the one thing needed: sit at his feet and listen so that we may love.—*gh*

the Mennonite

August 18, 1998

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16 'To see oursels as ithers see us!'

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Environmental problems

The excellent article about environmental racism ("Justice Down the Bayou," July 14) reminded me of a similar form of discrimination. Several years ago, a carload of Mennonite Your Way travelers from the East stopped at our home after a long drive from the Oregon coast. One traveler said, "I didn't realize that there was so much wasteland in eastern Oregon."

Calling someone else's homeland a "wasteland" is the geographical equivalent of calling an African-American a "nigger." That geographical discrimination against the West by Easterners is today acted out in our government's actions as it ships nuclear waste from the East to Idaho, where it's stored in leaky containers on top of the largest freshwater aquifer in the world. Future plans also include shipping radioactive waste to New Mexico and Nevada.

The Mennonite church should take an official public stand against this practice of seeing the homeland of other peoples as a wasteland, suitable for storage of toxic substances. Those who benefit from the production of radioactive and other toxic wastes should be required to accept the responsibility and consequences of long-term storage. Eastern Christians who use electricity generated by nuclear power or work for employers generating radioactive waste should be willing to store the waste in their neighborhoods, rather than shipping it to the West, where it threatens the environment of people who do not benefit from its production. We have our own local and regional environmental problems. We don't need others.
—*Leonard Nolt, Boise, Idaho*

Imagine the global disaster if all 5 billion-plus people on earth consumed and polluted as much as most Americans do. A way of life that cannot be enjoyed by all and cannot be sustained is evil. Having more than we need is stealing from the poor and killing them.

If all 5 billion-plus of us ate no meat and no dairy, drank no booze, smoked no tobacco and had only enough clothes to stay warm in cold weather, the earth's farmland could provide plenty of nutritious organic food for everyone.

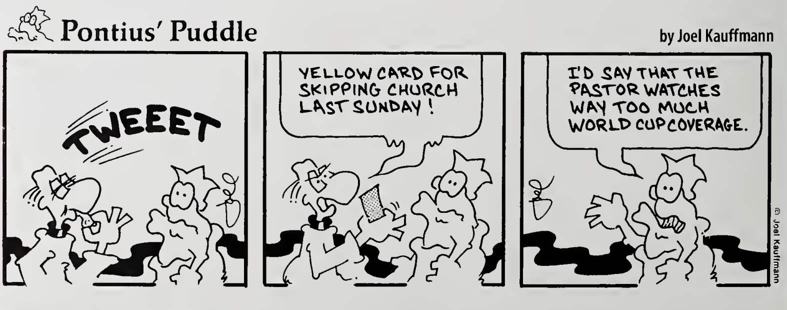
We can and must wake up, repent and live sanely, consuming and polluting far less.—*Don Schrader, Albuquerque, N.M.*

Mennonites and missions

"Mennonites Attend Mission Conference" (July 21) named four Mennonites who were among the invited participants at the St. Paul '98 Congress on the World Mission of the Church. I am surely not alone in my appreciation for the impact of James Scherer on Mennonite mission thinking, but the fact that he and Erland Waltner, president emeritus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, married sisters from a Presybterian missionary family in China does not make this Lutheran leader a Mennonite!

Two Mennonites missing from the list deserve public acknowledgment for their role in missions. Otto Driedger (and Florence, his wife, who was named) of Regina, Sask., retired dean of a university social work school, has devoted 10 years to help establish schools of social work to train professionals needed for the numerous serious social problems in the former Soviet Union. David Shenk of Eastern Mennonite Missions was a specialist for the Africa group reviewing the context of missions in Muslim contexts. Several of his books were on display in the bookstore, a visual symbol of the way this missiologist is respected.

Given the fact that so many of us have been raised with the attitude that the Lutheran Reformation did not go far enough and had no interest in missions, this congress, which was initiated and shaped by Lutherans, caused me



Pontius' Puddle

by Joel Kauffmann

TWEEET
YELLOW CARD FOR SKIPPING CHURCH LAST SUNDAY!
I'D SAY THAT THE PASTOR WATCHES WAY TOO MUCH WORLD CUP COVERAGE.
© Joel Kauffmann

theMennonite

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rs say readers say

to give thanks for the history of Lutherans in world missions during the past two centuries. *—Walter Sawatsky, director, Mission Training Center, Elkhart, Ind.*

Insular identity

The discussion in the Readers Say concerning whether to include or not to include births, weddings or obituaries did not include the decision by the editors to no longer include baptisms. The decision by the editors and its lack of discussion has been disconcerting to me on two levels.

First, it reveals a bias of viewing membership in the Mennonite Church as a cultural identity rather than reflecting our identity in Christ. To no longer include baptisms (the real entry point into an Anabaptist family of faith) while keeping the births listing advertises our preference for being a cultural group rather than a family of faith. Even the discussion about the inclusion of other cultural groups tends to focus on how to expand the Mennonite cultural identity rather than on how to create a new identity in Christ.

Second, it signals a direction that the creation of a new denomination with roots in what we know today as the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church might be taking. Rather than an increasing focus and value on including new people into the kingdom of God, it seems to reflect an increasing focus on preserving the values of an insular group of saints.

However, I am still hopeful that the focus and core values of the new denomination will be closely enough aligned with those of my congregation so that the new denomination can be a legitimate option for our affiliation. *—Allan Yoder, pastor, Good Shepherd Community Church, Stevens, Pa.*

Cover photo
by J. Lorne Peachey

Concerns about differences don't keep area conferences from regional merger

MOUNTAIN LAKE, Minn.—Exhibiting faith that polity differences can be successfully addressed for the sake of unity, one General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) district and two Mennonite Church (MC) area conferences have overwhelmingly approved a proposal to restructure into two integrated conferences ranging from Montana to Iowa.

Under the approved measure, Iowa-Nebraska and the Northern District congregations in Nebraska, South Dakota and southern Minnesota will constitute one conference. North Central, covering eastern Montana to northern Wisconsin, will form the core of the second conference. The Northern District congregations in the northern tier will have the option of joining either conference. GC congregations in Iowa, now members of Central District, are invited to join the southern conference.

The measure also authorizes the creation of an integration implementation committee. There was no timetable given for the merger process.

Iowa-Nebraska, North Central and Northern District delegates adopted the plan during the three conferences' annual meetings Aug. 6-9 in Mountain Lake—the first time the three regional neighbors had met together. The proposal breezed through Northern District, receiving only one dissenting vote and a handful of abstentions. North Central unanimously approved the plan, while Iowa-Nebraska passed it with an 89-percent vote.

Steve Ratzlaff, a Northern District representative on the integration exploration committee which drew up the proposal, said he was gratified by the size of the vote but added, "We felt this kind of support was there."

That support came despite the contentious issues of discipline, membership and homosexuality, which came to the floor in both the Iowa-Nebraska and North Central delegate sessions. Several Iowa-Nebraska delegates said regional integration should wait until after addressing GC-MC polity differences. "I think the questions of accountability are … important enough to know what we think about that before making the commitment to form two

Conference profiles

Iowa-Nebraska (MC): 4,420 members in 35 congregations in Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota. Founded in 1920 as a result of reorganization of several conferences.

North Central (MC): 500 members in 14 congregations in Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Ontario and Wisconsin. Founded in 1920 as a result of reorganization of several conferences.

Northern District (GC): 4,200 members in 33 congregations in Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. Founded in 1891.

Unexpected Iowa-Nebraska expulsion vote fails

MOUNTAIN LAKE, Minn.—In the latest confrontation over homosexuality, Faith Mennonite Church of Minneapolis has survived a surprise and reluctant expulsion vote by Iowa-Nebraska Conference. Fifty-nine percent of annual meeting delegates voted on Aug. 8 that the conference could not "remain in full fellowship" with the congregation, short of the two-thirds vote required for discipline actions.

Faith's acceptance of noncelibate homosexuals has been a point of contention for several years. The Iowa-Nebraska conference council, which had been hoping to avoid a vote, concluded on Aug. 5 to bring the matter to the delegates for action at Iowa-Nebraska's annual meeting, held Aug. 6-9 in Mountain Lake, Minn. Conference secretary David Groh said the council was "caught in a vise" between heavy pressure from some quarters of the Iowa-Nebraska membership and Faith's adherence to its position. He said the decision to vote was made after the council learned that Faith was not willing to make any statement of accommodation at the annual meeting.

While some delegates had caught wind of the late decision to take action, others did not learn of it until the morning of Aug. 8. Faith pastor Patty Friesen said she was told about it the day before the vote.

Action came after about 45 minutes of Faith presenting its position and response from the conference. The ballot, which offered yes and no options on expulsion, noted that Faith is "deeply committed" to most commonly held attributes of Mennonitism and that the vote

> **There were a number of people who would be happy for some other option.**—*David Groh*

new conferences," said Roger Farmer from Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

But voting for regional merger does not mean favoring one system over another, said Tim Detweiler from Washington (Iowa) Mennonite Church. Rather, work will need to continue to find an acceptable solution.

"I know there are differences for us to work through, but I know both [GC and MC members] have a heart for following Christ," he said. "Delegates will continue to have a voice in this whole process. A decision will not be made without our input."

That was echoed in North Central's delegate session. Joining the regional merger will offer opportunity to advocate a more conservative position, said conference secretary John Kauffman. "If we become part of it, our voice will be heard," he said.

Walter Clinton from Casselton (N.D.) Mennonite Church noted that the issues of concern would remain regardless of North Central's vote on regional merger.

Now that the plan is approved, a number of congregations will have to decide which conference to join. In Iowa, four of the six Central District congregations have already expressed their willingness to join the new southern conference, said Central District conference minister Lloyd Miller. In Montana, the six Northern District congregations have similarities with the current North Central congregations, such as small size, isolated northern locations and bivocational pastors. At the same time, the Montana congregations have historic ties to the Northern District congregations that will make up the southern conference. Pat McFarren from Bethlehem Mennonite Church, Bloomfield, Mont., has floated the idea of joining both conferences.

Rich Preheim

Keriann Pauls (left) of Henderson, Neb., and other youth clean up what was left of a silo felled by a storm several weeks earlier on a farm near Mountain Lake, Minn. The group was part of a service project of Iowa-Nebraska, North Central and Northern District youth attending the three conferences' joint gathering in Mountain Lake Aug. 6-9. Other youth worked on a Habitat for Humanity house in nearby St. James, served in local retirement centers and worked for the city of Mountain Lake.

If none of the Northern District's northern congregations join the new northern conference, its composition will remain the same as the current North Central. Nevertheless, North Central's official participation is seen as a big step for a conference which had previously opposed integration, is theologically conservative and is much smaller than Iowa-Nebraska or Northern District.

"I am heartened by the unity expressed in the result of the vote," said Galen Kauffman, a North Central representative to the regional integration exploration committee. "I look forward to what comes next."

Iowa-Nebraska, North Central and Northern District become the second group of area conferences this year to approve regional integration. Central District, Illinois, Indiana-Michigan and Ohio conferences have also voted to restructure themselves.

The first regional merger occurred 10 years ago in Canada when one GC and two MC conferences formed the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. Six years later, another GC district and two more MC area conferences reconfigured to create the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Southwest area conferences.

The Iowa-Nebraska, North Central and Northern District meetings featured as speaker J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Other activities included service projects for the youth and workshops on topics ranging from Mennonite Women to art in the church. *—Rich Preheim*

We felt this kind of support was there.

—Steve Ratzlaff

comes at a time when the broader church is studying polity issues.

According to the conference constitution, Groh said, expulsion is the only form of discipline; there is no provision for suspension. "There were a number of people who would be happy for some other option," he said.

After announcing the vote's results, Iowa-Nebraska moderator David Boshart quickly snuffed out a smattering of applause. "There is nothing to celebrate," he said, visibly upset. "In this situation, everyone loses." Boshart then chastised conference members who "command [Iowa-Nebraska] to do [their] bidding and do not come to conference"—those who pressured conference leadership into bringing the action and then were not present to vote.

Boshart and Groh said next steps are unclear. Friesen said her congregation, while not planning to change its stance on homosexuality, also does not claim to have the "final answer." "It's not a done deal," she said. "We need to keep talking."*—Rich Preheim*

Wrapped in an angel's wings

God's peace felt in Capitol attack, witness says

When Bernadette McGurrin, her 8-year-old son, Colin, her sister and six others visited Washington on July 24, the group had no intention of visiting the Capitol. But they ended up going and were just about to leave when gunfire roared through the Rotunda.

McGurrin, a member of Bethany Mennonite Church in Dayton, Va., believes God wanted her group to be there.

She and her son ducked behind an ornate pillar they had been admiring. "He was hysterical," McGurrin says. "I didn't realize then that he had seen the [first] officer get shot."

Crouching over Colin, McGurin put her hand over his mouth, and they began to pray. "We thanked God for being with us during this time, acknowledging that he was in control, that it was OK that he was allowing this," she says. "We remembered to pray for the gunman, the way we pray for our enemies."

Deafening gunshots continued, but even so, McGurrin says, a sense of God's peace settled over the two. "Later, Colin told me, 'Mom, it must have been an angel with its wings wrapped around us,' " she says. "And that's what it was like. The terror was gone. We had a physical awareness of a canopy, not of safety, but a canopy of peace just barely surrounding us, like an umbrella."

> **We had a physical awareness of a canopy, not of safety, but a canopy of peace just barely surrounding us.**
>
> *—Bernadette McGurrin*

McGurrin was then able to look around her. "If I'm going to die, I want to die well, not cowering," she thought. The second police officer killed in the shooting was around a corner, hidden from view. But she did watch the gunman fall. Recalling the words of Psalm 91, McGurrin drew up her son to see for himself "the reward of the wicked."

"I did not want him to go away afraid," McGurrin says. "I wanted him to know that God took care of us."

When it was safe, the two ran out of the building, where they cried with others who had witnessed the violence. McGurrin and Colin were reunited with the rest of their group, which had been scattered in three areas when the shooting began. Together, they huddled in a circle on the Capitol steps, praying that God would somehow use all this for his glory.

A few days later, McGurrin and her husband returned to the Capitol to attend the memorial service of the two slain police officers. "It was hard to come back," she told the *New York Post.* "But I love them and I love what they did for me. ... I would have regretted it for the rest of my life if I didn't return here to say thank you."

While she still believes in the separation of church and state, McGurrin feels grateful for the government in a way she wasn't before. The bravery of a lone officer entering the battle, giving his life to protect tourists who were strangers to him is imprinted on her memory. She now sees the government as another instrument used by God.

But that doesn't lessen her commitment to nonresistance. "I always used to wonder what would I do if it came down to a situation like this," McGurrin says. "But I knew then that I wouldn't fight back, that I'd let myself be shot rather than resist. When the moment came, God sent the grace and strength."—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

MCC workers evacuate Congo as tensions rise

AKRON, Pa.—As fighting intensifies between factions in Congo, Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) seven workers in the country have decided to leave and wait out the situation in South Africa.

Congo country representatives Ann and Bruce Campbell-Janz remained in the capital city of Kinshasa during last year's civil war. But the current situation is different, says Terry Sawatsky, co-director of MCC's Africa programs. "Both sides in the current conflict are seasoned veterans, and fighting reported in the east indicates battles are severe with high casualties," he says.

"There are rumors and counter-rumors about what is causing this most recent uprising," Sawatsky says.

In addition to the Campbell-Janzes and their son, MCC Congo workers are Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya in the eastern Congo city of Bukavu; Stephani Barg and Andrea (Heather) Ranck, both participants in MCC's young-adult SALT program; and Duane Falk, an internship program participant.

The decision to evacuate was made Aug. 11. Rigalo and Lumeya had wanted to stay in Bukavu. The MCC workers hope to return in several weeks. In the meantime, two Congolese MCC staff members will maintain the office in Kinshasa.—*MCC News Service*

Correction: In the story on the Conference of Mennonites in Canada annual sessions in the July 28 *The Mennonite,* a quote was wrongly attributed to Henry Neufeld. The quote was by Dave Peters of Saskatoon.

MCC Cambodia workers strive for election peace

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—Cambodians were nervous in the days leading up to their country's July 26 elections. Rumors of politically motivated killings and charges of bribery and corruption swirled around. Some international workers even decided to leave Cambodia.

But Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers decided to stay during the tense pre-election days to provide a peaceful presence in the communities where they serve.

MCC workers handed out peace materials, including booklets urging people to do what they could to keep the elections peaceful. Cambodians in one MCC project site responded enthusiastically, asking the agency to help organize a peace walk. About 300 people walked from village to village, handing out booklets and wearing T-shirts that said, "We want a nonviolent election."

"To see 300 people walking in a line about 300 meters long, all because they were interested in supporting peace, was a moving experience," says MCC worker Larry Groff.

On election day, Edgar Janz, another MCC worker, served as a monitor as thousands of voters eagerly thronged to his neighborhood polling station. Janz reports the process was peaceful, and he later helped count the votes.

"Cambodians warmly accepted and appreciated my presence," he says. "They long for peace to come to their country. I felt it was important to help ease tensions and fears during the actual process of voting and counting."

Election results have not yet been announced.

Four MCC workers also participated in a pre-election national peace walk, joining about 250 people who walked 56 miles over six days to express their desire for peace and to encourage a violence-free election.

MCC nurse Sherry Groff served as the walk's medic, bandaging blistered feet. Many walkers were over the age of 70 and refused to stop walking despite their pain. "Their unflagging zeal was a reminder of the desperate need for peace in Cambodia," says Janz, who also participated in the walk.

When the walkers reached Phnom Penh, the capital, some 3,000 people joined them. "It was a privilege for MCC workers to walk in solidarity with so many Cambodians who are deeply committed to making peace a priority for their country," says John Wiens, another MCC walker. "And as an American, walking together with Cambodians was a symbol of repentance and reconciliation for the effects of past U.S. policies that contributed to the present state of Cambodia."

During the Vietnam War, U.S. planes bombed Cambodia, including Mesang district, where MCC now runs small-scale development programs.

The United Nations five years ago organized an election in Cambodia, aimed at bringing democracy to the country after decades of civil war and Khmer Rouge rule, which caused the deaths of some 2 million people from 1975 to 1979. The elections were considered a success, and a coalition government was formed. But tensions within the coalition grew, and last year one faction forcibly overthrew another one.—*MCC News Service*

MCC photo by Pearl Sensenig

A young Cambodian boy tends his water buffalo in rural Mesang, where Mennonite Central Committee focuses its development work. MCC workers last month took part in activities to encourage peace during the country's recent elections.

MEDA programs in Nicaragua, Bolivia become independent

WINNIPEG—Graduation means a time of closing one chapter of life and beginning another. For Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), graduation doesn't include caps, gowns or diplomas, but it does mean seeing its programs become independent businesses.

Four MEDA programs are taking that step this summer: Chispa, a microenterprise assistance program, and Proarte, a marketing agency for artisans, both in Nicaragua; and Asomex, an agricultural commodities marketing agency, and Bolivia Consultora, a management consulting company, both in Bolivia.

The greatest assistance these four programs had been receiving from MEDA was funding through grants. "The primary indicator of independence is financial autonomy," says Ron Braun, head of MEDA's international operations. "They're making it on their own."

That means it is time for MEDA to let go. "This is what graduation and maturing are all about," Braun says. "You may not agree with every decision the graduates will make, but you give them the autonomy to make those decisions."

Other members of the unofficial MEDA alumni association include a credit union in Haiti and agricultural stores and dairy factories across South America.—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

What it takes to become a multicultural church

Relinquishing power as we seek to become a multicultural sign of God's reign

by Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower

California is leading the way in an anti-immigration mood that is growing in the United States in reaction to the changing population. Voter initiatives in California are aimed at discouraging immigration. Proposition 227, passed in June, made bilingual education illegal, discarding an important means of helping new immigrants get a good start in a new culture. In 1996 voters passed the California Civil Rights Initiative, an anti-affirmative-action measure. Public services such as hospitals and schools were denied to illegal immigrants with the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994. In 1986 a ballot measure passed declaring English the official language of the state. A shrinking and increasingly anxious majority appears to be getting more desperate. An opponent of Proposition 187 sarcastically labeled it the "They're taking our stuff" initiative.—*Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower*

The Fresno, Calif., area Mennonite pastors met for lunch one day. We sat around a card table in the church office eating. Three of us had bags from McDonald's. Ed brought a lunch from home. Chue had a can of coconut juice and a bag of shrimp chips. Oscar was fasting. Those of us whose first language is English dominated the conversation.

After we ate, the conversation shifted to more formal sharing about what is happening in our lives and ministries. When invited, Oscar and Chue did not hesitate to jump into the conversation. Oscar and the people of Amor Viviente have found a church building that does not have a congregation meeting in it. It seems like an ideal location for them. Their first request was refused, however, because they do not belong to the denomination that owns the building. Oscar has not given up hope. "The building belongs to God. If God wants us to meet there, God will make it available. We must pray," he said.

Chue had heard the day before that several families from Hmong Community Church—Mennonite may move away. Last year the church lost 10 families who moved to other places where they could find jobs. In Fresno they are trapped by the welfare system and high unemployment. "Here people earn $5.75 an hour when they start working. Other places they start at $8.50 or more," said Chue.

"That's wrong," said Oscar. "They shouldn't leave. It's a spiritual situation. The evil one is taking away the people you need to build the church. We must pray." We explained to Oscar the economic realities of life for the Hmong people in Fresno. He was partially convinced. "But we still must pray," he said.

Ken raised questions about relating to members who have served in the military. How do we respond pastorally to people and show them that we value them when part of their story involves such service?

We came to the end of our time and took time to pray together. Oscar prayed passionately in Spanish for Chue and Hmong Community Church. Ed prayed for Ken and his ministry at First Mennonite. Chue prayed in Hmong. The rest of the group added their prayers, and the meeting ended.

After the meeting I was euphoric. I could picture the scene from Revelation 7 in which people "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" are standing before the Lamb singing praises. I saw Edward Hicks' painting "The Peaceable Kingdom" and heard the words of Isaiah 11:6, 9: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid. ... They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." I thought to myself: "This multicultural group that had lunch together is what God had in mind. This is what God's reign is all about."

Opportunity: Multiculturalism is a challenge and an opportunity in our society and in the church. The demographic landscape is rapidly changing. Sometime before the year 2000, whites will become a minority in California. Asian, Latino, African-American and other "minorities" will be in the majority. Demographers say that California is leading the way for the nation (see item at left).

What is the role of the church in this changing society? We are called to be a sign of God's reign, to model a peaceable kingdom. A Catholic priest, Finian McGinn, who has worked in multicultural settings in California for many years, suggests that the church may be the only institution that can meet the challenge of multiculturalism. "I have spent many years," he says, "trying to convince public schools, public school districts and even welfare departments to become more multicultural—but to no avail. Conversion, forgiveness, sacrifice, patience, understanding and charity are woven into the fabric of religious life. These are the same virtues required to make an institution multicultural."

To desire to be a multicultural church that is a sign of God's reign is one thing. To actually become one is another.

From the church growth movement we have heard about heterogeneous vs. homogeneous groups in the church. While many of us defend heterogeneous groups as the way of the gospel, we also admit that we are more comfortable when we are with people like our-

Photo courtesy of Doreen Martens

Peaceable kingdom: A multicultural choir sings at Pacific Southwest Conference in June.

selves. We Christians still have areas of blindness and prejudice, as the Damascus Road anti-racism training points out. We have places where our ignorance of cultural differences and the dynamics of multiculturalism cause us to stumble. Conversion, forgiveness, sacrifice, patience, understanding and charity are sometimes in short supply in the church, even without the added challenge of multiculturalism. We need serious commitment and intentional efforts if we are going to let God help us become a multicultural church.

The challenge to lay down power is not an easy one to hear for those of us who are white and powerful, partly because it is hard for us to acknowledge that we have power. We do not want to have power over others, so we tend to deny the reality of power that we hold. I am reminded of my power, however, when an Asian-American pastor says: "Our church doesn't want to spend a lot of time talking about this cooperative project. Just tell us what you want us to do."

Hints: What would it look like for the institutional church and those of us who are powerful in the church to lay down power as we seek to become a multicultural sign of God's reign? As we have worked at multiculturalism in Pacific Southwest Conference, I see these hints of what this might mean:

- The powerful members of a pastors' peer group like the one described above give up power when they genuinely try to include people of different cultural and language groups. The nature of the group is different. Instead of being a place where pastors "let down their hair" and share stories, complaints, jokes and other small talk, it is a place where more formal conversation and prayer take place as pastors support one another.
- A congregation lays down power when it provides for translation into a second language, disrupting the flow and expanding the time of its usual worship service. Power was abused in a recent joint service of English- and Chinese-speaking congregations in northern California when translation from English was not provided. This was not anyone's intent, but it resulted from insensitivity and oversight.
- A conference lays down power when it meets at a place and time more accessible to the powerless than to those with power. Pacific Southwest Conference made an effort to do this as we gathered for our annual assembly at Iglesia Evangelica Bethel in North Hollywood, Calif. It was empowering for this Hispanic church to host the conference and share its life and culture with the conference. At the same time, some of the powerful missed a capella, four-part singing and felt stretched by the Latino praise band leading worship.
- The church is challenged as it enters the 21st century in an increasingly multicultural society to become the "peaceable kingdom," modeling multiculturalism as a sign of God's reign. Some of the best practical advice to help us along the way comes from a person who lived most of his life in Hawaii, where multiculturalism has developed in a healthy way: "You get along [in Hawaii] when you go beyond putting up with differences, and even beyond accepting them, and you actually start valuing them. Sometimes the closest you can get to people with different backgrounds and traditions is to glimpse how very different you are without wishing to make them like yourself" (David Paxman, *A Newcomer's Guide to Hawaii*, Mutual Publishing, 1993).

We must realize that how we follow Jesus, how we worship, how we live out the calls to community, discipleship, peace and justice will look different depending on our cultures and our backgrounds.

We in the Mennonite church are challenged to learn to be different together in the church and to value those differences as we all seek to follow Jesus faithfully. We must realize that how we follow Jesus, how we worship, how we live out the calls to community, discipleship, peace and justice will look different depending on our cultures and our backgrounds. When we are able to see how different we are and value those differences without wanting to make others like ourselves, we will become a bright sign of God's reign in North American society.

Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, Fresno, Calif., is area minister for Northern California for Pacific Southwest Conference. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Fresno Pacific University and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.

Eric H.F. Law, a Chinese-American, has written a provocative book, *The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (Chalice Press, 1993). He points to the issue of power, which is at the heart of developing a multicultural community. People perceive power and their access to power differently, based on cultural differences and life experiences. Whether or not the perception is accurate, it creates the reality people experience. In general terms, the white establishment has power while people of color lack power. Law reminds us that Jesus called the powerful to lay down their power, while he worked to empower the poor and the powerless.
—*Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower*

Strangers united in peace

by Malcolm Wenger

Our greatest challenge is to become family with these people of the 'strange' Mennonite names.

Six generations ago, my ancestor Christian Wenger, came to Pennsylvania in 1727. The frontier church he participated in and of which he became one of the ministers still exists. Groffdale Mennonite Church of Lancaster County now has about 300 members. Even though these Mennonites came from the Anabaptist movement that had put highest priority on taking the Christian gospel "to every creature," they now became known as the "quiet in the land," saying in effect to their neighbors, "If you leave us to our beliefs we will leave you to yours."

A few Mennonite churches sent delegates to a meeting in West Point, Iowa, where in 1860 a conference was formed that, among other things, would carry on Christian missions. My maternal great-grandfather was present at that meeting. Dutch Mennonites had already sent missionaries to Java, then a Dutch colony, in 1851. By the time my Uncle Paul was sent to India in 1923, the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) had had just over 40 years of experience in missions to Native people—Arapaho, Cheyenne and Hopi—and to the people in India and China. Other Mennonite conferences had also become active in missions, and Mennonite Central Committee had just been formed to bring food to starving Mennonites and others in south Russia.

Twenty years after Uncle Paul left for India I was applying to the GC Board of Missions for service. In March 1944, Esther (my wife) and I left for Montana.

The following year four GC members started mission work in Colombia. Not long after this, at GC sessions in Freeman, S.D., the conference voted to start a new mission effort in Japan.

Six years ago the General Conference Mennonite Church committed itself to planting 50 new churches by the year 2000. Thirty-five new churches have already joined, and 29 are emerging. These churches reflect a growing diversity. Here are the names of the leaders of these emerging Mennonite churches: Daniel Genest, Montreal; Tong Hang, St. Paul, Minn.; Jan Miller, Omaha, Neb.; Sisasy Desalgen, Seattle; Chau Hong Dang, Edmonton; Jeffrey C. Long, Ephrata, Wash.; Ramon de la Pena, Salem, Ore.; Mark Chen, Renton, Wash.; Boris and Bonnie Sithideth, Mississauga, Ont.; Samuel Moran, Milwaukie, Ore.; Simon Rendon, McMinnville, Ore.; F. Jan Kouttjie, La Mirada, Calif.; Doroteo Rivera, Warden, Wash.; Sutanta Adi, Chino, Calif.; Juan Montes, Reedley, Calif.; Steve Cheramie Risingsun, Gretna, La.; Jorge Argueta, Upland, Calif.; Melaku Meduria, San Diego, Calif.; Oscar Solorzano, Fresno, Calif.; Byron Pellecer, Miami; Louis Lenares, Boca Raton, Fla.; Joe and Nancy Gatlin, Waco, Texas; Gordon Allaby, Dover, Ohio; Tong Chitchalerntham, Mountain Lake, Minn.; Shoua Moua, Arvada, Colo.; Job D. Martinez, Dallas, Texas; Rich and Becky Bartholomew, Powell, Ohio; Chuwang Pam, Los Angeles; Ed and Gloria King, Peoria, Ill.—*Malcolm Wenger*

As I use the Directory of Mennonite Missions for our morning prayer time, I am thrilled to discover that Mennonite missions are now active in many countries: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mongolia, Senegal, Chile, Macau, South Korea, England, Nepal, Ireland, Spain, Thailand. New names with Mennonite connections keep popping up. Add to this the many locations where Mennonite Central Committee does relief, development and justice ministries, and there are not many countries in the world that have not been touched by Mennonite ministries.

In my brief life (75 years) I have witnessed the globalization of the Mennonite church, now with a million members, over half of whom live in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

North America: These contacts have been changing us in North America as well. Some 50 languages are now spoken by people living in Los Angeles. My boyhood home of Aberdeen, Idaho, population 1,400, is now one-third to one-half Hispanic.

To use Hispanic growth in the United States as an example, *U.S. News and World Report* (May 11) says California is now 30 percent Hispanic, and in just over 20 years Hispanics are expected to outnumber whites. In two years Chicago is expected to be 27 percent Hispanic. Miami, with 1 million Cubans, is already dominated by Hispanics numerically, politically and economically. They make up 60 percent of the population, up from 5 percent in 1960. The label "Hispanic" obscures the enormous diversity of peoples coming from two dozen countries. The article counts 17 different subcultures, the largest of which is Mexican.

Many other peoples are also making the United States and Canada their home. These include Japanese, Chinese, Laotians, Indonesians, Ethiopians and other Africans, Vietnamese and many others.

Read the list of names in the box at left. When we realize that these names include those of French, East African, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Laotian, Colombian, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Indonesian, Ethiopian and Hmong people, the list seems to parallel the list of those present at Pentecost (Acts 2).

CHM photo

Cheyenne Mennonite pastor Joe Walks Along

I thought the white man was trying to find a new place in the skies so he could move there and give this world back to the Indians, but it didn't work out that way. All he brought back was a few rocks.—*Joe Walks Along*

The Mennonite church in North America is changing in ways unprecedented since Mennonites first came to this continent. We had been able to build walls around ourselves that enabled us to speak of "Mennonite names," names that exhibited our rootedness in Swiss and German ancestry. No more.

Our greatest challenge is to become family with these people of the "strange" Mennonite names.

The earliest church faced a similar challenge. It is rooted in the gospel. The apostle Paul speaks of the mystery of the gospel, God's secret plan or purpose: "He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10).

One new humanity: The gospel is not a mystery in the sense of a riddle but something unanticipated, startling for a first-century Jewish Christian. God, who had tried through the centuries to shield his chosen people from the contamination of the idolatry surrounding them, was doing something new. The time had come to bring Jews and Gentiles together, reconciled, at peace. These two hostile groups who wouldn't even speak to each other were now to become one: "He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it" (Ephesians 2:15-16).

In a world of ethnic and class hatreds, the mystery of the gospel, the secret plan of God, is to bring hostile people together in peace through the cross. Pastor Joe Walks Along of Lame Deer (Mont.) Mennonite Church told this joke shortly after the landings on the moon: "I thought the white man was trying to find a new place in the skies so he could move there and give this world back to the Indians, but it didn't work out that way. All he brought back was a few rocks."

But if you asked Joe for his favorite verses in the Bible, he would not hesitate to quote Ephesians 2:19-20: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone."

John Howard Yoder summed it up in these words: "The work of Christ is not only that he saves the soul of individuals and henceforth they can love each other better. The work of Christ, the making of peace, the breaking down of the wall, is itself the constituting of a new community made up of two kinds of people, those who had lived under the law and those who had not" (*The Politics of Jesus*).

The church best shows the power of the gospel when diverse people formerly at odds with one another are formed into a new people of love and concern.

The church best shows the power of the gospel when diverse people formerly at odds with one another are formed into a new people of love and concern.

How do we make it clear in our local congregations that the gospel brings different people together in a new family? Perhaps a small beginning is for us to get to know someone outside our comfort zone, someone from a different class, race, language or religion. Let's get to know them well enough to be at ease with each other, to be able to share some of the ups and downs of our lives and what is important to us.

Malcolm Wenger, a longtime mission worker, is retired in Newton, Kan. This article is adapted from a sermon he gave at Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton.

MCC project participant killed in embassy blast

A Kenyan woman involved in a Mennonite Central Committee bead project was one of the people killed in the Aug. 7 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi. She was riding in a bus near the embassy when the explosion occurred.

"It makes the tragedy even more real when one knows a victim," MCC Kenya worker Carolyn Schan wrote in an email to MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa.

MCC helps more than 100 Masai women market their traditional beadwork in Africa and abroad through Ten Thousand Villages. The Masai are an ethnic group in Kenya and Tanzania.

No MCC workers were injured in the blasts at the U.S. embassies in Kenya or Tanzania.—*MCC News Service*

MCC to assist Argentine flood victims

AKRON, Pa.—At the request of the Argentinian Mennonite Church, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) will provide five months' worth of food supplies for 2,500 people affected by April floods in northern Argentina's Chaco province.

MCC will provide $20,000 for food boxes of flour, sugar, shortening, powdered milk and pasta or rice. The Argentinian Mennonite Church will distribute the food.

The floods, which devastated Chaco's cotton production, highlighted the marginalized conditions in which the region's indigenous people live. They are often exploited for cheap labor and live meager existences, even during good cotton harvests.—*MCC and MWC news services*

Late missionary served in India for 45 years

GOSHEN, Ind.—Vesta Nafziger Miller, a Mennonite Board of Missions worker in India for 45 years, died July 28 in Goshen, Ind. After graduating from Goshen College, Miller went to India in 1938 to work in a school. She married S. Paul Miller in 1941, and together they served in India until they retired to Goshen in 1983. Her responsibilities included teaching and supporting her husband, a missions administrator.—*MBM News Service*

Longtime Asia worker dies following stroke

NEWTON, Kan.—Hugh D. Sprunger of Lancaster, Pa., a longtime worker with Asian peoples for the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and Commission on Home Ministries (CHM), died Aug. 4 of complications following a stroke. He was 70.

Sprunger and Janet, his wife, retired earlier this year from more than 40 years of service. They most recently had worked with Chinese and other Asian congregations in North America on behalf of CHM and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada's Resources Commission. The Sprungers served with COM in Taiwan from 1954 to 1978 and in Hong Kong from 1980 to 1992. —*GCMC News Service*

Mennonites to participate in interfaith survey

CHICAGO—Some 700 Mennonite congregations will be among participants in a national interfaith survey in January 2000. The Cooperative Congregational Study Project will include more than 40 groups including Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim.

"The survey will open a window to the variety of congregational life in the United States," says Karen Klassen Harder, a Mennonite researcher for the survey. —*GCMC and MBCM news services*

Church chat

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Summer Service worker Wendy Colindres visits with (left to right) Karla Cruz, 7; Karol Cruz, 5; and Genesis Madian, 6, outside United Revival Mennonite Church in New York. The three girls attended the congregation's Vacation Bible School, which Colindres helped organize. She was one of 66 participants in this year's Summer Service program, which enables youth of diverse ethnic backgrounds to work in their home communities for 10 weeks.

MCC photo by Pearl Sensenig

Events

Developing a Narrative Spending Plan workshop, Oct. 17, North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo, Ind. Sponsored by The Giving Project. Contact: givingproject@Prodigy.net or 219-296-6236.

Workers

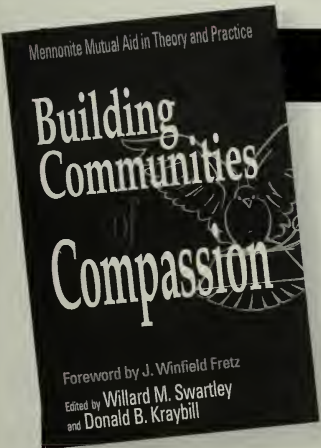
Epp, Eldon, completed a pastorate at Manhattan (Kan.) Mennonite Fellowship on Aug. 1.
Gehring, Barb and Richard, will begin in September as pastors of Manhattan (Kan.) Mennonite Fellowship. Richard will end a pastorate at Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Louis, Laurent, was installed May 31 as pastor of Immokalee (Fla.) Mennonite Church.
Snader, Esther, Reading, Pa., is beginning a two-year assignment with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and China Educational Exchange.
Smith, Gordon, will begin Sept. 1 as pastor of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.
Schrag, Eric, will begin Sept. 1 as youth minister at Trinity and First Mennonite churches, Hillsboro, Kan.
Zimmerly, Glenn and Martha, Orrville, Ohio, are beginning a three-year assignment with EMM in Lushnje, Albania.

Births

Barner, Caroline Grace Lyman, June 13, to Cori and Kirk Lyman Barner, Harrisonburg, Va.
Dawson, Connor, June 26, to Caroline (Kruse) and Donald Dawson, Bluffton, Ohio.
Gabel, Heather Noel, July 7, to Brad and Kathy (Van der Werff) Gabel, Los Angeles.
Geiser, Jaret Anthony, June 22, to Deron and Michele (Moronski) Geiser, Bluffton, Ohio.
Fitzgerald, Matthew Hunter, July 28, to Jenifer (Miller) and Michael Fitzgerald, Bridgewater, Va.
Horst, Josiah Douglas, July 5, to Becky (Steiner) and Doug Horst, Birmingham, Ala.
Kachel, Jansen Llewllyn, July 21, to Craig and Lisa (King) Kachel, Lancaster, Pa.
Kahila, Caleb Edward, July 28, to Chris and Kerri (Miller) Kahila, Hesston, Kan.
Landes, Andre Hange, July 10, to Scott and Wendy (Hange) Landes, Perkiomenville, Pa.
Longenecker, Jace Benjamin, June 27, to Fred and Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, Iowa City, Iowa.
Miller, Jessica Lynn Leahy, May 26, 1991, received for adoption June 30, 1998, by Janice (Sharp) and Lynn Miller, Albany, Ore.
Miller, Makenzie Jeanne, July 3, to K. J. (Fulcher) and Mike Miller, Nampa, Idaho.
Parmer, Max Dillon, May 15, to Kirsten (Nafziger) and Trevor Parmer, Harrisonburg, Va.
Peachey, Leah Marie, July 19, to Lester and Shirley (Peachey) Peachey, Belleville, Pa.
Vanwingerden, Ashley Sue, July 16, to Jacob and Wendy (Boll) Vanwingerden, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Marriages

Arthur/Nand: James Arthur, South Bend, Ind., and Shanti Nand, South Bend, July 25, by Phil Mininger.
Bergey/Leatherman: Glenda Bergey, Telford, Pa., and Benjamin Leatherman, Hamburg, Pa., Aug. 1, by John Ehst.
Brenneman/Maucec: Michael Brenneman, New Hamburg, Ont., and Kathy Maucec, New Hamburg, July 11, by Glyn Jones.
Chappell/Lakin: Katie Chappell, Bluffton, Ohio, and Mark Lakin, Hesston, Kan., Aug. 1, by Dorothy Nickel Friesen.
Christophel/Lichti: Jennifer Christophel, Goshen, Ind., and Nathan Lichti, Goshen, May 30, by John Sharp and Nancy Kauffmann.
Diaz/Rodriguez: Jesse Diaz, Chicago, and Maria Luisa Rodriguez, Chicago, July 5, by Ingrid Schultz.
Diener/Gingerich: Arlis Diener, Kansas City, Kan., and Marsha Gingerich, Kalona, Iowa, June 27, by Mervin Hershberger and Wilbur Nachtigall.


Mennonite Mutual Aid in Theory and Practice
Building Communities of Compassion
Foreword by J. Winfield Fretz
Edited by Willard M. Swartley and Donald B. Kraybill

Mennonite Mutual Aid in Theory and Practice

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Deaths

Cressman, Arnold Willis, 69, Mount Pleasant, Pa., died July 8 of septacemia. Survivors: wife, Rhoda; children Jennifer, Eric, J. Robert; four grandchildren. Memorial service July 12 by Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz.

Kratz, Abram, 82, Souderton, Pa., died July 24. Survivors: wife, Minnie; children Curtis, Abram, Esther Kolb; foster son, David Derstine; 17 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 26 at Franconia, Pa., by John Ehst and Floyd Hackman

Layman, Martha, 75, Fairview, Mich., died July 8 of congestive heart failure. Survivors: husband, Ernie; children Karen Grant, Linda Graham, Kathy, Paul; one grandchild. Burial: July 11 at Fairview by Terry Berg.

Litwiller, Clifford C., 80, Jacksonville, Ill., died July 21. Burial: July 25 at Hopedale, Ill., by Robert Nafziger.

Near, H. Wells, 70, West Liberty, Ohio, died July 26. Survivors: wife, Joanne; children David, Mark, Thomas; five grandchildren. Memorial service Aug. 4 by George Bashore and Randy Reminder.

Neff, Elizabeth, 87, Fairview, Mich., died June 1 of congestive heart failure. Survivors: son, Tom; 12 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Burial: June 4 at Fairview by Terry Berg.

Nisly, Earl Dean, 54, Hutchinson, Kan., died July 25 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Esther; children Earl Jr., Deron, Susan; two grandchildren. Burial: July 29 at Yoder, Kan., by Peter Hartman and Ken Miller.

Reichenbach, Frederick, 78, Bluffton, Ohio, died July 24. Survivors: wife, Bernice; children Norman, Linda Burkholder, Rhonda Pallas Downey; six grandchildren; four stepgrandchildren. Burial: July 27 at Bluffton by Dorothy Nickel Friesen.

Roth, Stanley Eugene, 50, Hesston, Kan., died July 18 in an aircraft accident. Survivors: wife, Jan; children Zachary, Matthew; mother, Lois Roth. Burial: July 22 at Hesston by Loren Swartzendruber.

Schlabach, Levi, 98, Hartville, Ohio, died June 30. Survivors: children Lucille, Alma Miller, Edna Troyer, Lewis, Earl; 21 grandchildren; 76 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 2 by Joe Yoder.

Schneck, Ida Nussbaum, 80, Orrville, Ohio, died June 20. Survivors: children Daniel, James, Diane Murphy, Barbara Adolph; 14 grandchildren. Burial: June 26 at Orrville, by Herman Myers and Terry Shue.

Schrock, Clifford, 85, Washington, Ill., died July 14. Survivors: son, Ronald; two grandchildren. Burial: July 19 at Garden City, Mo., by Verle Brubaker.

Short, Dorothy, 77, Wauseon, Ohio, died July 18 of a heart attack. Survivors: son, Wendell; one grandchild. Burial: July 22 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Edward Diener and Dan Young.

Short, LaMar, 68, West Unity, Ohio, died July 4 of heart failure. Survivors: wife, Doris; children Gordon, Randy, Lynn, Kathi Bauer, Kris Griffiths; 18 grandchildren. Burial: July 8 at Stryker, Ohio, by Allen Rutter, Mark Miller, Wendy Miller and Jim Groeneweg.

Siemens, Katharine Buller, 90, Buhler, Kan., died May 25. Survivors: children Jack, Judy; one grandchild. Burial: May 29 at Buhler by Robert Dalke.

Thiessen, Carol Jane, 58, Buhler, Kan., died May 31. Survivor: parent, Ruth Froese. Burial: June 3 at Buhler by Harold Thieszen.

Wittrig, Lyle, 82, Garden City, Mo., died July 13 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Rose; children Dean, Edith Miller, Joan Campbell; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Burial: July 17 at Garden City by Wilmer Hartman and Ken Steckly.

Yoder, Edward Daniel, 47, Stryker, Ohio, died July 1 in an automobile accident. Survivors: wife, Ruth Ann; children Dan, Charles, Doug. Burial: July 6 at Stryker by Allen Rutter, Mark Miller and Wendy Miller.

Yoder, Herbert, 93, Davidsville, Pa., died July 20. Burial: July 22 at Davidsville by Donald Sharp.

Classifieds

Peace Mennonite Community Church, Aurora, Colo., seeks enthusiastic, Christ-based ***pastor*** for congregation with new worship facility. Emphasis on growth, spiritual nurture and outreach.

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by Omar Eby

The apple of God's eye

Keep me as the apple of your eye.—Psalm 17:8

No reading of the Old Testament could suggest that God loved every man and woman and child equally. "All men are created equal" is the essence of 18th-century Enlightenment, but hardly of the Jewish God. Indeed, the 18th-century intellectual gave the lie to his own philosophical thesis. A glance at the revolutionary decades and Jefferson's America shows that only men were respected in politics—white, literate, land-holding men. Not black men or red, indigenous men; not women—red, black or white.

In a review of their salvific history, Moses told the gathered tribes that the Lord regarded their spiritual father, Jacob, "as the apple of his eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10). It's the old "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." God eyes particular men and the occasional woman: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Solomon, David. He hardly looks in favor on all his children, he who decreed special treatment for eldest sons. Solomon uses the imagery in a proverb he attributes to the Lord: "Guard my teaching as the apple of your eye" (Proverbs 7:2).

David, then, is using an old expression of deep yearning for affectionate attention, for favorite personal shalom: "Keep me as the apple of your eye."

But how does one cry to the Lord for such preferred treatment and also utter, "Probe my heart; you'll find nothing evil" (v. 3)? Is there nothing unseemly about clamoring, indeed, pining to be "the apple of God's eye"?

The ancients regarded apples as aids of health. The apple could hardly have been the fruit denied Adam and Eve. What did the expression mean—and would you want to have the sharp focus of the divine eye on you? An apple is a beautiful fruit, unblemished, a gem. You eye it, ward off worms and birds and thieves, solely to eat it. What is the divine ecstasy, the divine horror? To be consumed by God? Do you want to be the "apple of God's eye"?

O Lord, I, rotten, rust-flecked, blemished, am not worthy to be called "the apple of your eye." Yet resigned, I must say, So be it.

Guile

Blessed is the man … in whose spirit is no deceit.—Psalm 32:2

The 1611 King James Version uses "guile" for "deceit." Guile: insidious cunning; duplicity; artful deception, trickery, wily. And this sentence from Louis Auchincloss' novel *The Rector of Justin*: "He had all the guile and charm of a papal bastard in the Renaissance." (How I would love to have written that line!) About a friend I once wrote, "He is without guile." And a childhood Sunday school song: "Keep my lips from guile." But other than that, I rarely use or see the word.

Working a lifetime in Mennonite institutions, I have learned "artful deception": The mission/service news release that put a favorable spin on a sorry event. A smooth tack by the college against a conservative negative wind growling about student drinking.

And the rows of my personal, premeditated guile by silence. Often I think much of my life has been a lie. I so rarely know the presence of Christ's Spirit in my mind. I so handsomely fail at living out a radical Anabaptist life of peace and simplicity. Yet I hold aloft these ideals for my children, for my many students.

The verse claims that a person with a guileless spirit is blessed. I am heavy with doubt that an aging man can regain the fresh spirit of his youth. Living not only refines, it corrupts.

O thou Lamb without guile, forgive this tiger his cunning. Amen.

Omar Eby teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Often I think much of my life has been a lie. I so rarely know the presence of Christ's Spirit in my mind. I so handsomely fail at living out a radical Anabaptist life of peace and simplicity.

Resources for faith

Beyond Our Prayers by Nathan B. Hege (Herald Press, 1998, $14.99 U.S., $21.50 Cdn.) tells the story of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia and its phenomenal growth during the 1980s and 1990s.

On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics, edited by Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey (Eerdmans, 1998, $49) is the second edition of the most comprehensive anthology of medical ethics written from a theological point of view. Its more than 1,000 pages are written by leaders in the fields of theology, ethics and medicine.

The *1998/1999 Mennonite Central Committee Resource Catalog* describes audiovisual and printed resources available from MCC. All audiovisuals are loaned free—you pay return shipping only. For more information contact MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; 717-859-1151; mailbox@mcc.org.

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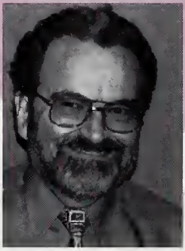

J. Lorne Peachey

'To see oursels as ithers see us!'

Who of us hasn't built for ourselves a persona about who we are, one that may or may not square with reality or with what others think? The same can be true for groups. As a church, a Mennonite people, we think about who we are in certain ways. These may or may not conform to what people outside think.

Recently I came across two observations about Mennonites that reminded me of all this. The first was from Philip Yancey in his book, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (Zondervan, 1997). Yancey recounts growing up in a church in which rules and regulations outlined being Christian. Members of his church did not smoke or drink, attend movies, listen to rock music, cut their hair (if they were girls) or not cut it (if they were boys), wear makeup or jewelry or swim in "mixed" groups.

"I grew up with the strong impression that a person became spiritual by attending to these gray-area rules," Yancey writes. "[And] my visits to other churches have convinced me that this … approach to spirituality is nearly universal. Catholics, Mennonites, Churches of Christ, Lutherans and Southern Baptists all have their own custom agenda of legalism. You gain the church's, and presumably God's approval by following the prescribed pattern."

We seem to be more interested these days in defining law and grace than we are in confronting the powers, both within and without, about the use of force and coercion.

There we are—Mennonites—second on the list. A legalistic church? We want to protest: "You don't understand. We take our faith seriously. We try to follow Christ in all of life." But like it or not, the way we give attention to the details of being disciples often gives the impression to outsiders like Yancey that we are more on the side of the law than grace.

This critique of us comes, not from that side of the Christian church known for its more "liberal" approach to the gospel, but from the conservative, evangelical wing of this church. Another view from the outside of who we Mennonites are does come from the former group. I found it in the July 1-8 issue of *The Christian Century* in an interview with three North American theologians on the subjects of homosexuality, marriage and the church.

During the interview, someone asked, "Is sex so significant in God's eyes? Is it more significant in God's eyes than the way we share food and possessions?"

To which Max Stackhouse, professor of Christian ethics at Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary, replied: "Obviously not. We have just been through 150 years of bloody struggle over the nature of socialism and capitalism, and a lot more lives were lost in that battle than are going to be lost in the battle over homosexuality. And if you talk to our Mennonite friends, they would say that the fundamental moral question of our time is not homosexuality but the use of coercive power."

"Ah, yes," we want to say, "how right he is!" But before voicing that smug satisfaction, it might be well to remind ourselves that we too have joined most other churches in North America in becoming wrapped up in questions of sexuality, faithfulness and obedience. At least I hear less these days about peace, justice and reconciliation than I do about establishing borders. We seem to be more interested in defining law and grace than we are in confronting the powers, both within and without, about the use of force and coercion.

If we continue as we are, would Stackhouse be able to say the same thing about us 50 years from now? Or would he join Yancey in seeing us as a more legalistic group?

Of course, we must always be careful when evaluating ourselves through the opinions of others. This is not only true for individuals but especially so for churches. God's call to faithfulness sometimes means ignoring what others think and carving out another way.

But not always. In his poem "To a Louse," Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) details how this small creature wreaked havoc with the impression the woman in front of Burns in church was trying to create, slowly crawling up her hat. Writes Burns, in his Scottish brogue: "O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us / To see oursels as ithers see us! / It wad frae mony a blunder free us, / And foolish notion."—*jlp*

the Mennonite

August 25, 1998

the road less traveled

following the path of faithful stewardship

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11 The Generous Unwashed Prodigy
14 Jesus has a temple tantrum

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Authority, respect and the discipline dilemma

Coping with change isn't easy. It may feel similar to that of the 13-year-old who said, "When I get my room the way I like it, my mom makes me change it." Integration may feel to some like that: a feeling that some things are off limits to being changed or "cleaned." Might it just be true that the issue of congregational autonomy vs. conference authority comes into this category for many of us?

I would submit that two things might help us resolve this issue: (1) that we consciously and persistently keep our focus and connection firmly grounded in our anchor, the Lord of the church; and (2) that we commit ourselves as congregations and conferences to practice what we preach, what we have officially approved in Article 16 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.*

Acceptance and practice of mutual accountability and responsibility by local congregations and by conferences, as called for in Article 16, will create a unity of purpose that will encourage and facilitate working together on important matters relating to faith and life and in a common mission.—*Lawrence H. Greaser, Goshen, Ind.*

The discipline dilemma is no more of a problem than Jesus addressed in the parable of the prodigal son. Did the parent beg the son to stay and live out his desires within his household of fellowship? Absolutely not! The son's desire to live out contrary values was neither blessed by the father nor condoned within his household. Rather, he was allowed to withdraw himself to pursue these desires. The father didn't ask him to leave. But it was clear in the son's mind that these desires were outside the boundaries of acceptability within his parent's household.

I believe we would do well to learn from the parable of the prodigal son how God views those who want to live outside the values he has established for his household. He doesn't kick them out. They know they are not welcome to exercise those values within the household, and they remove themselves out of respect. That is a concept greatly lacking today: respect for God's Word, his standards and his church.—*Bradlee T. Bame, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

German civilian service

I was pleased to read about the increasing number of Germans entering Mennonite Voluntary Service ("Increasng Number of Germans Looking to MVS for Cross-Cultural Experience—in United States," Aug. 4). This followed up an article on the conscientious objector program in the Federal Republic of Germany which appeared in the June-July issue of *German Life.* Currently more than 130,000 German conscripts serve in their Ziviliendienst, almost as many as the 137,000 serving in the Bundeswehr, Germany's armed forces. They serve much as conscripts did in Civilian Public Service: hospital orderlies, aides in homes for the aged, driving amulances and doing conservation work.—*Heinz Janzen, North Newton, Kan.*

The price of security

As a military Mennonite for 55 years, I agree with Gordon Houser's recommendation that people considering a military career should see *Saving Private Ryan* (Mediaculture, Aug. 4). But we disagree about why. In my view, the movie portrays the terrible price our military people paid in World War II.

Members of my family were and are actively serving in the U.S. military. As civilians in everyday life, we need police protection on a daily basis; our nation needs the same. The local police force provides security for my

Pontius' Puddle

by Joel Kauffmann

IT'S GREAT THAT CHURCHES FROM AROUND THE WORLD CAN GET TOGETHER TO COMPARE THE WAYS WE SUFFER FOR OUR FAITH!
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Vol. 1, No. 26, August 25, 1998

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s say readers say

property and family; the U.S. military does the same for our nation.—*Ronald V. Woelk, Hutchinson, Kan.*

Sitting in judgment

I would like to confess my sins related to Readers Say. I have been doing some Bible study lately (Thessalonians, Timothy, 1 and 2 Peter and Titus) and have become aware of some very un-Christlike behaviors on my part.

I used to delight in reading this column. It tickled me to read letters from so many people who seemed like they had nothing better to do than to point out the faults of others. We blamed, condemned and accused anybody for everything, and I got a kick out of it. I also took part by jumping on the bandwagon, writing a letter and pointing out that I believed it was absurd to differentiate between secular and Christian. My intentions were to highlight how the church has become closed minded and exclusive. It struck me as ironic to see this letter-writing from a community that was supposed to be saving people. It is not for humans to sit in judgment; that belongs to Christ. For me, 2 Peter 1:5-7 and 2:19 struck home with my behavior.—*Alex Beattie, Orrville, Ohio*

Amazing grace

I have friends who have done the "Walk to Emmaus," and so my interest level has been raised. So when you expressed in your July 7 editorial, "There Is Such a Thing as a Free Lunch!" your absolute certainty of God's love for you forever and all that means as you work it out, my heart was warmed. God's grace is amazing, and we do get a free lunch!

When you are excited about your own personal walk with Jesus, we can trust you to write about issues as you see them from your editorial chair.—*Erma Lehman, Newport News, Va.*

Cover photo
by Marilyn Nolt

Readers Say trivia

In its first 25 issues (through last week's issue), *The Mennonite* has run 247 letters from 238 authors in Readers Say. That's nearly 10 letters an issue. More than a third of them came from two states: 45 from Pennsylvania and 42 from Indiana. Kansas had the third highest number of letters with 23. Nine letters came from Canada, and 10 from other countries.

Correction: S. Roy Kaufman's letter in Readers Say July 21 should have read: "I intend to return to the United States and will do so with a new perspective on how to be a faithful Christian in a secular society." The letter as originally printed said, "faithful citizen in a secular society."

Entering the fray

My sister has long identified herself as either gay or bisexual. It has been both a blessing and a challenge to be so close to this issue. On the one hand, I have always loved my sister and want her happy, healthy and whole. On the other, I have always considered myself an "orthodox Christian," striving to discern and then take seriously what the Bible says. I live with the uneasy tension between faithfulness to Christ and fidelity to my sister.

Our congregation has recently begun a study on the issue, and I must admit to some trepidation. I don't know whether this study will bring me closer to some sort of clarity or plunge me into even deeper confusion. As I have plowed through, however, I have been struck by a few thoughts that both humbled and energized me.

First, I decided to stop throwing around words and phrases like "biblical inerrancy" and "historical revisionism" until I was able to find out what they really meant for me in this context. That is not to say that God does not speak to us in his Scriptures, but, in this instance, I am challenged to depend not just on text but on constant prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit, so I can perhaps more fully experience the text through God's eyes.

Second, I found that my decades of ambivalence have actually stood me in good stead; I have been fortunate to come to this issue with both sides percolating in my head. Too often people have come into the fray with a preformed agenda—whatever the position—and will not brook any arguments, however strong, that challenges or refutes their prejudice.

This has been for me the most unfortunate by-product of this debate: that our views, regardless of where we are on the spectrum, supersede God's will. The most important lesson we might learn is to pray, to fast, to meditate, to resolve to do God's will before we embark on a search for truth. Otherwise, our search will be incomplete, and we will have dropped the ball on one of the most important issues for our new merged church in the coming century.—*Lacie Watkins-Bush, San Diego*

The disagreement on homosexual "sin" isn't really what divides us. It's a power issue. Apparently some Mennonite conference leaders believe that accepting a practicing sinner into the church without at least a prayer of repentance would be condoning the sin. They also believe that exercising their judgment and power to reject the sinner who doesn't see his sin will somehow protect the church from that sinful practice. As if human power over others, not the spirit of Jesus, is needed to cleanse the church. But either position can attract a sizable congregation of Old Testament-style Christians who want this kind of power with its trappings of Mennonite humble arrogance. So the congregational excommunicators have a following.

As a teenager, I listened to my elders at the Iowa-Nebraska Conference 1960 delegate assembly debating what to do with a congregation that allowed members to stay in good standing who were practicing television viewers and radio listeners. At a Goshen (Ind.) College chapel in 1963, I listened to Clarence Jordan tell about being excommunicated because of unrepentant association with blacks in church as equals. I decided some sins are more worth confronting and some less from a New Testament perspective.

Like many leaders today, it must have been perfectly clear to Peter, the apostles and the early church that the voice "from Heaven" commanding "kill and eat" was directly in opposition to God's law (see Leviticus). Yet they were responsive to the Spirit's direction. We need to learn the strong language of Paul in his letter to the Galatians against legalism and use this language against the legalism of some leaders today. They don't need to be excommunicated or expelled to encourage repentance.—*Dave Graber, Hardin, Mont.*

It is very disturbing to read so many letters that appear to find excuses for practicing homosexuality in which there is no regard for what God has said about it in the Bible. Practicing homosexuality is one of the limited number of sins for which God (not some congregations) ordered that both persons be put to death (Leviticus 20:13). Homosexuality is among the list of sins for which the Holy Spirit (via the apostle Paul) informed the church that people practicing such will have no part in the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9).

When practicing homosexuals appear before the judgment seat and inform Jesus that they were members of the Mennonite church, will his response be the same as in Matthew 7:23 and Luke 13:26, 27? And what will be the responsibility of the church leaders who caused them to believe it is acceptable? —*Verle O. Hoffman, Elkhart, Ind.*

J. Konrad asserts "There are no levels of sin" (Readers Say, Aug. 4). In 1 Corinthians 6:18, Paul clearly differentiates "sexual immorality" from "all other sins" and states that sexual sins are sins against the body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost. "All other sins" are outside the body.—*Kenneth L. Weaver, Washington, Ill.*

Kenyan pastor slightly injured in blast

NAIROBI, Kenya—A Kenyan Mennonite pastor was slightly injured in the Aug. 7 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi. But a group of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) workers may have avoided injury or death in the explosion due to a last-minute change of plans.

The pastor has already been released from the hospital and is doing well, Kenya Mennonite Church bishop Philip Okeyo wrote in an email message to EMM headquarters in Salunga, Pa.

"Although it is indeed very difficult for us to understand why, our trust and hope is with our God," Okeyo wrote. "He is the only one who is able to comfort us."

Several new EMM workers, recently arrived in Nairobi for orientation sessions, had planned to go to the embassy on the day of the bombing to register their presence in the country. But the group decided instead to visit a game park. No EMM workers were injured in the bombing, although Ahmed and Martha Haile reported that some windows were broken in their housing development.

EMM had about 20 workers in Nairobi when the bombing occurred. The city is also home to four Mennonite congregations.

"We don't know how this will affect us until it all settles down," Jay Garber, an EMM worker in Nairobi, wrote in an email to EMM headquarters after the blast. "This is a sad day for Nairobi."—*Carol L. Wert of EMM News Service*

Although it is indeed very difficult for us to understand why, our trust and hope is with our God.

—*Philip Okeyo*

Five years after retirement, portable meat canner gets second shot at service on Belizian colony

AKRON, Pa.—After traveling some 174,000 miles in annual trips across the eastern half of the United States for 20 years, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) portable meat canner is making one more journey: to a Mennonite colony in Belize via ship.

MCC used the canner from 1973 until it was retired in 1993 and replaced by a new one. While the old canner sat at MCC's warehouse in Ephrata, Pa., material resources manager Kevin King tried to sell it. His word-of-mouth efforts generated numerous inquiries from charitable groups but no sale.

Then Blue Creek Mennonite Colony heard about the canner via an Ontario Mennonite with connections to Belize. For the colony, the canner offered a chance to preserve fresh vegetables and meat during times of abundance for use when prices are higher. MCC agreed to donate the canner to the colony.

After five years of inactivity, the canner needed about $5,000 worth of repairs, which were made by Blue Creek members who came to Pennsylvania from Belize.

"We're delighted to see the old canner put to such good use," King says. "The people [from Blue Creek] ... have already done the necessary repairs to the canner and are on their way. I'm excited for them."

The canner was the second to be used by MCC since it started the canning program. The first, used from 1946 to 1973, is on display at Kauffman Museum on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kan.—*MCC News Service*

MCC photo by Chris Kennel

I can't look

Perhaps rationalizing that what she can't see won't hurt, a girl in the Laotian village of Na Heng covers her eyes as a health worker pricks her finger to check her blood for malaria antibodies. Malaria testing is part of Mennonite Central Committee's health work in the region, where malaria is common. MCC-trained health workers in remote villages such as Na Heng sell chloroquine medicines from MCC-supplied health chests. When the medicines are administered immediately, they usually cure the disease.

MWC leadership considers greater role in international Mennonite church

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite World Conference is more than an international assembly every half-dozen years. But how much more is the question as MWC looks at its future and structures while the Third-World church continues to grow and as North American bodies look to develop better overseas partnerships.

"I believe our assembly in Calcutta [in January 1997] gave us something to build upon," executive secretary Larry Miller said at the annual MWC executive committee meeting July 20-25 on the Goshen College campus. "We are prepared to grow more interdependent and closer to each other. MWC may not be highly visible. But it is the only international instrument we've got, and it's a very flexible instrument."

MWC may not be highly visible. But it is the only international instrument we've got.

—Larry Miller

While the executive committee approved a plan for a global missions consultation and responded favorably to an idea for a new young-adult exchange program, Miller also said an expanded role in the global church may demand more than MWC is capable of giving. Most work is done by volunteers, and the organization historically has struggled financially, although that has stabilized and the Calcutta assembly broke even. "My primary concern is having adequate human resources to carry out the requests," Miller said.

Mennonite Central Committee brought to the meeting an idea for a joint MCC-MWC young-adult exchange program without one end of the exchange being in the United States or Canada. As a North American agency, MCC has been reluctant to sponsor a program where, for example, a person from India could learn and serve in Cambodia. But MCC now wants to explore ways of broadening its work.

"We need North American Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to understand the seriousness with which MCC is aiming for greater accountability to the global church through MWC," MCC board chair Phil Rich told the MWC executive committee.

MCC and MWC have been sending observer participants to each other's meetings since the Calcutta assembly. The MWC executive committee agreed to consider a three-year pilot exchange program. The idea now goes back to MCC staff for further processing.

The Council of International Ministries (CIM), an association of 14 North American Mennonite mission and service agencies, also came to the meeting to explore ways of cooperation in the global church.

"We are committed to moving ... from ugly paternalism to mutual effort," said CIM representative Stanley Green, president of Mennonite Board of Missions. "It is clear to us that we need the spiritual vitality, the experiences in suffering, in fact, all the gifts of the global church."

The MWC executive committee agreed to plan with CIM an international Anabaptist missions consultation, to be held in Colombia in July 2000.

As part of the organization's self-examination, Miller floated the idea of changing MWC's name to Mennonite World Communion to emphasize accountability and solidarity among the member churches. MWC president Mesach Krisetya said the name change would reinforce a movement already under way. Reflecting on the conditions facing Christians in his home country of Indonesia, Krisetya said, "In a time of stress, we are especially thankful to have a supportive family of faith."

In other meeting business, the committee:

- Authorized delegations to do on-site evaluations of the three countries wanting to host the next MWC assembly. The churches in Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe have each issued invitations, although Zambia has not returned a questionnaire (see box.)
- Agreed to join the North American Mennonite seminaries in exploring a pilot project of rotating seminary classes in Asia or Africa, thereby not requiring students in those regions to come to North America or Europe for further education.
- Met with representatives of the Conservative Mennonite Conference who want to begin the process of becoming MWC members. The committee also began processing membership requests from churches in Angola and Venezuela.—*MWC News Service with Rich Preheim*

How sites for MWC assemblies are picked

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) receives an invitation from a member church or churches. Each inviting church then completes an extensive questionnaire regarding location, government relations, health risks for foreigners, goals for the assembly and more. An MWC delegation visits each proposed site to assess potential meeting facilities, lodging, transportation and other logistical concerns. The final decision rests with MWC General Council.—*MWC News Service*

EMM photo by Friederike Ernst

A different kind of service

Seth Hankee (left), leader of Eastern Mennonite Missions' Youth Evangelism Service team in the Miami area, serves a customer at a local 1950s-style hamburger restaurant. Three of the five YES team members worked part-time at the restaurant to support the team, which concluded its eight-month assignment in August.

Tiny Puerto Rico Conference undertakes big project for church growth, stronger identity

AIBONITO, Puerto Rico—It all sounds so ambitious, maybe even daunting for one of the smallest area conferences in the Mennonite Church: Better trained leaders. Better organized congregations. Increased church membership. More congregations in more regions. Support groups in the areas of evangelism, teaching, preaching and proclaiming the Word.

But the 11-congregation Puerto Rico Conference is taking on all these goals after adopting a new initiative this spring. Project Vision 2000 is designed not only for church growth but to help members form a stronger identity as Mennonites, linking their present life with their Anabaptist heritage.

Before all these goals can be met, however, the conference needs educational tools. So Puerto Rico is producing new Spanish-language materials written by and for Puerto Rican Mennonites.

Project Vision 2000 originated in the island's oldest congregation, Iglesia Menonita de Betania, located in Coamo and pastored by conference moderator Ramón Bermúdez. Hoping to develop leaders within the congregation, Bermúdez helped the congregation in 1996 divide into six small groups and found that such settings gave members the support they needed to study and grow spiritually.

Bermúdez began writing materials on fundamental Christian and Anabaptist concepts, using them both in sermons and adult Sunday school classes. "It was a tremendous experience for the church," he says.

Gradually he saw that the combination of small-group support and education had the potential to transform the entire conference.

Since it adopted Project Vision 2000, Puerto Rico has created five regions in which leadership training can take place. In each region, the conference intends to form support groups for church workers in various areas of ministry such as children, young people and music. Two classes have been developed for new believers, instructing them on general aspects of the Bible, its authority and the process of conversion. Before baptism, Bermúdez says, "We have to take care that a new brother or sister is really prepared, knowledgeable."

He is also in the process of writing a three-year curriculum. The first year's materials, which are finished, feature three three-month courses plus three one-month courses on topics ranging from discipleship to preaching, from stewardship to prayer and fasting. After the first year, potential church leaders will go through two more levels of study: a year on biblical, Mennonite and conference history, and then the final year—likely at a seminary—focusing on theology, exegesis and biblical interpretation.

Bermúdez believes Project Vision 2000 can help the Puerto Rican churches stand on their own and not depend on the substantial support they have received from Mennonites outside the island. "Now we think we will not grow enough to be adult if we don't start with [our own leadership development]," he says. "We cannot depend on the U.S. to help us grow; we have to find a way to do things here in our capacity."—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

The Puerto Rico Conference has its origins in the work of Civilian Public Service and Mennonite Board of Missions starting in the 1940s. The Convención Iglesias Evangélicas Menonitas de Puerto Rico was organized in 1955 and became a Mennonite Church area conference in 1994. The conference has 530 members in 11 congregations.

MBM workers plan return to mission field—again

ELKHART, Ind.—Some overseas mission workers worry about culture shock or new foods. MBM workers Steve and Sheryl Martin have a little more on their minds: evacuation.

Because of fighting in Afghanistan, the Martins in the past year have moved not once but three times.

The Martins in 1991 moved to Kabul, Afghanistan, where they both worked with a nongovernmental, interdenominational organization (NGO) created to provide development-oriented programs to the Afghan people. Four years later the family moved to Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan, due to "security concerns."

When fighting broke out in the Mazar-e Sharif area last year, the family was evacuated to neighboring Pakistan. "We get to Pakistan a little more often than we'd like," Steve Martin says.

Most recently, the family returned to Kabul, where they are still working with the same NGO. They now are on a North American assignment in the United States and anticipating the birth of their second child. But the Martins plan to return to Afghanistan in October.

The family is holding up well through all the moves, Martin says. Their toddler, Sara, is perhaps the most well-adjusted of the three. "She does fine, probably better than her parents do," he says.

The Martins look forward to returning to their work in Afghanistan. "We're picking up where we left off, as long as the situation doesn't change," Martin says. "Of course, it always has the potential to."

As it did again recently. The government demanded that the staff members of all the NGOs in Kabul move into one compound. When the organizations refused, they were asked to evacuate and their offices were shut down.

"We're not sure if that will happen in other areas of the country or not," Martin says. "We hope that negotiations with the government will allow work to continue to some degree."

Despite the uncertainty, Martin will continue business as usual. He serves as an accountant for the NGO, and evacuation doesn't drastically affect his working situation. "If I get relocated, I just take the computer," he says.

Sheryl's work, on the other hand, changes with the new locations. She had worked as a nurse in a clinic in Mazar-e Sharif, dealing mainly with preventative medicine. In Kabul, she worked in a clinic aimed more at curing existing ailments.

While optimistic about returning to Afghanistan, the Martins are realistic about the difficulties they will face. Says Martin, "When is it not difficult living in Afghanistan?" *—Rachel Lewis of MBM News Service*

Russians to Canada note anniversaries

This year marks several anniversaries for Mennonites who left the suffering of Russia and immigrated to Canada in the 1920s and 1940s.

Seventy-five years ago this summer, on June 22, 1923, 738 people left the Russian Mennonite colony of Chortitza, arriving in Rosthern, Sask., a month later. From then until 1930, more than 20,000 Mennonites came to Canada, settling in various provinces.

A similar story unfolded nearly 25 years later as Mennonites found themselves caught in the Soviet Union following World War II. But 8,000 Mennonites were able to get to Canada between 1947 and 1951. The first group arrived on Oct. 16, 1947.

A celebration was held in Winnipeg Aug. 15-16, focusing on the experiences of Russian Mennonites who immigrated to Canada between 1947 and 1951. ***—Mennonite Historian***

MCC-assisted efforts alleviate Sudanese famine

AKRON, Pa.—While hunger appears to be worsening in southwest Sudan, Mennonite Central Committee and a coalition of international church agencies have helped bring a looming famine under control in an eastern province. Now MCC will shift its focus to increase efforts in southern Sudan.

Eight months ago, children were dying of hunger in the province of Blue Nile, located along the Ethiopian border. MCC joined the church-agency coalition to provide 1,000 metric tons of maize, 65 tons of seeds and 14,000 agricultural tools to the province after fighting displaced some 34,000 people. MCC's contribution was $180,000 toward the food purchase plus 65 tons of sorghum, maize and cowpeas valued at $20,000.

Local church workers report that although malnutrition is still widespread, the famine has been turned into a "manageable food crisis."

Meanwhile, MCC is appealing for $300,000 to step up relief work in the southern part of the country. "Because of ongoing war, Sudan will experience shifting pockets of famine on a regular basis," says Terry Sawatsky, co-director of MCC's Africa programs. "Our most effective approach is to have the ability to respond quickly. For that reason, we need funds so we can buy resources in Africa [rather than shipping from North America] and move them quickly into needy areas of Sudan."

As in Blue Nile province, MCC plans to first supply people in southern Sudan with food—likely maize and sorghum—and later with seeds and tools. MCC targets neglected areas, particularly those not served by the United Nations.

During the past 13 years, MCC has contributed an average of $1 million worth of aid to Sudan annually. So far in 1998, MCC has provided aid—primarily food and seeds—valued at $500,000. MCC does not run its own feeding programs but works through local churches. The agency has worked in the country for 25 years, also supplying teachers and supporting peace work. *—MCC News Service*

Cellar blues

by Jean Janzen

I sing the harmony of summer jars,
of rusted keys and tools forgotten
under the sloping doors.
These are the tunes of the secret ear,
the cellar blues lost between
rows of canned plums and oozing walls.
I play the whole keyboard of cellars
as I sing—whitewashed ones
and dirt dugouts, bleached sheets
rolling out of the washer's mouth
and caught above the muddy floor,
songs of warped soundboards
and yellowed dissonance.
Even the church had a basement—
cool fragrance of body-earth
where cake and the coffeepot's tune
blended with roses and the dampness
of brides, a hymn for our appetites
which hold a key to the staircase.
I pry the stubborn lids of jars
sealed against taste for decades
and moan—glad blues, pungent
and dark blues, hot tomato harmonies
and watermelon pickle songs
with a slow, jazzy bass rhythm
of potatoes popping their eyes.
The pipes thump along and drip
staccato on curled shoes, the jars
join in, clinking shoulder to shoulder
in a brand new key of B-sharp minor
until the ceiling shakes and sifts
its dust into the amazed cellar-ear,
that fertile, inscrutable ear
which now flings its doors open
and leads me into the blinding light.

Jean Janzen lives in Fresno, Calif.

Marilyn Nolt

Jesus must weep

A call to be faithful with our wealth by fighting materialism and sharing generously with the poor

by Ronald J. Sider

Most Mennonites do not live—and most pastors do not preach—what the Bible says about the poor. I know that sounds harsh. Some will think I have forgotten grace or that I lack sympathy for the painful struggles of middle-class Christians. Not for a minute. My own sin is too present for me to forget the glorious truth of justification by faith alone. Perplexity and uncertainty often surround my wrestling with tough decisions about how much to spend on myself and how much to share with needy neighbors.

But I feel a heavy sadness about the church today that compels me to speak bluntly.

Three things just do not fit together. (1) Hundreds of biblical texts teach that God and God's people care about the poor. (2) Almost one-quarter of the world's people try to survive on only $1 a day. (3) Yet American Christians who are 150 times richer give less and less each year as their wealth continues to grow.

Hundreds of biblical texts teach that God and God's people care about the poor. Almost one-quarter of the world's people try to survive on only $1 a day. Yet American Christians who are 150 times richer give less and less each year as their wealth continues to grow.

It is blatantly obvious that most middle-class Western Christians do not practice what Jesus preached. The gulf between Jesus' words and our actions turns secular neighbors away from our Christ.

Jesus said that if we do not feed the hungry and clothe the naked, we go to hell (Matthew 25:41-46). He taught that anybody in need is our neighbor. He insisted that we cannot serve God and money.

Every part of the Bible underlines God's special concern for the poor. "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord," says the writer of Proverbs 19:17. According to Jeremiah, one does not truly know God if one does not help the poor and needy (22:16). I collected all the biblical texts on poverty, justice and the poor in a book, *For They Shall Be Fed*, and it is 200 pages long.

In spite of substantial progress in the last few decades, 34,000 children die every day of hunger and preventable diseases. Almost one-fourth of our world's population—1.3 billion people—lives in grinding poverty, struggling to survive, the World Bank says, on $1 a day. And 1.45 billion have no access to health services, while 1.33 billion lack safe water.

Golf: According to the United Nations, it would only cost $30 billion to $40 billion a year to provide all people in developing countries with basic education, health care and clean water—the same amount the rich spend on golf every year.

The richest 20 percent of the world's people—and that includes the vast majority of Christians in Western nations—are 150 times as rich as the poorest 20 percent. That kind of abundance makes possible vast, generous sharing. Instead, the richer we become the less we give. The typical American family is twice as wealthy as in 1957. But church giving has declined almost every year since 1968.

In 1968, the typical U.S. church member gave less than one-third of a tithe (3.14 percent of income). Today the typical U.S. church member gives 2.46 percent. Jesus must weep.

The corrosive power of modern advertising helps us understand this disobedience. The average 5-year-old watches 3 1/2 hours of television a day. The average adult watches five hours, which means watching 21,000 commercials a year. And the message is the same:

Dale D. Gehman

If we Western Christians are to avoid losing our very souls, we must mount a collective, sustained battle against today's prevailing materialism.

"Buy something—now. Happiness comes through more and more material possessions."

If we Western Christians are to avoid losing our very souls, we must mount a collective, sustained battle against today's prevailing materialism. And we cannot do it alone. As isolated individuals, it is virtually impossible to resist modern materialism with its seductive advertising. We need Christian communities of loving defiance who define themselves as a Christ-centered counterculture to society's prevailing consumerism. That will require Christian leaders who dare to teach the whole Bible, small groups where we can strengthen each other's resolve, and courageous choices by every believer.

Every Christian who desires to be faithful must wrestle hard with one simple question: Is there as much emphasis on the poor in my preaching, teaching, life and giving as there is in the Bible?

I once asked the president of a well-known Christian college this question: "If you examined all the programs, both curricular and extracurricular at your college, would you find as much concern for the poor as there is in the Bible?" He just hung his head in sadness.

In light of the widespread neglect of biblical truth in this area today, Christian leaders who seek to be faithful will lead their congregations or ministries in a careful, extended analysis of their teaching and programs. No matter what the cost, they will insist that their people and programs change so that they reflect as much concern for the poor as does the God of the Bible. Any leader afraid to do that does not really believe in biblical authority. Any pastor who chooses not to teach the full biblical word because "the people cannot hear it" worships job security rather than Jesus.

Faithful economic lifestyles: People, of course, do need gentle pastoring and regular encouragement. Many want to live obedient, generous lives but feel overwhelmed and desire concrete help. Small groups that cultivate costly discipleship are one of the best ways to nurture faithful economic lifestyles. Small groups that develop trust over many months of open sharing, prayer and Bible study can begin to discuss family budgets in light of biblical teaching and global needs for evangelism and economic development. Strong small groups that get beyond superficial sharing offer perhaps the best context for developing successful Christian resistance to surrounding consumerism.

Finally, each of us must engage in personal hand-to-hand combat with materialism.

I wish every Christian would spend at least half a day once a year in personal retreat focused on this issue. The best place to start would be to read many of the hundreds of biblical verses on God's amazing concern for the poor. Then, in that context, one could reflect on one's personal life and ministry, asking the simple question: Is there as much concern for the poor in my life as there is in the Bible? If person by person we did that and then looked openly into the face of our Lord and promised, I'll change anything you want me to change if you show me the way and give me the strength, revival would sweep our churches, society would improve and non-Christians would embrace our Lord.

Suffocating materialism: As I have thought and prayed about a successful resistance movement to consumerism, I have begun to dream of a "Generous Christians Campaign"

Any pastor who chooses not to teach the full biblical word because 'the people cannot hear it' worships job security rather than Jesus.

The Generous Christians Pledge

I pledge to open my heart to God's call, to care as much about the poor as the Bible does. I therefore commit:

- *Daily*, to pray for the poor, beginning with the Generous Christians Prayer: "Lord Jesus, teach my heart to share your love for the poor."
- *Weekly*, to minister at least one hour to a poor person: helping, serving, sharing with and, mostly, getting to know someone in need.
- *Monthly*, to study at least one story, book, article or film about the plight of the poor and hungry and discuss it with others.
- *Yearly*, to retreat for a few hours with the Scriptures to meditate on this question: Is caring for the poor as important in my life as it is in the Bible? Also, to examine my budget and priorities in light of it, asking God what changes I need to make in the use of my time, money and influence.

Is there as much concern for the poor in my life as there is in the Bible?

Jesus must weep

continued from page 11

that could sweep through the Western church. Mission agencies, prayer networks, Christian social ministries and others could join to plead with affluent Christians to break the bonds of today's suffocating materialism. Rallies, conferences, retreats, small groups, contemporary music, creative art and more would all be important.

At the center could be a simple pledge: the Generous Christians Pledge (see page 11).

Conceptually, the pledge is simple, straightforward, easily doable. But implementing it will involve intense spiritual warfare. The global forces promoting consumerism are powerful. The only power strong enough to resist and defeat their demonic lies is the One who burst from the tomb on Easter morning.

Faithful discipleship in an age of cascading materialism will be costly. But it will also be joyful and successful. Jesus was right—it is better to give than to receive. Mother Teresa knew more joy than does Donald Trump.

And giving works. Today we know many things that work and we have the resources. Generous Christians can dramatically reduce global poverty. Thanks to the tens of thousands of generous volunteers who donate a few Saturdays a year, Habitat for Humanity has built 18,000 houses for the poor in the United States and 60,000 houses globally.

One of the greatest success stories of the last 20 years is the explosion of microloans. Millions of desperately poor people have received tiny loans of $75, $200 or $500 so they can start small businesses and thus provide a better living for their families. Mennonite Economic Development Associates has been a leader in this exciting movement.

Generous Christians will live what they speak. They will joyfully follow the biblical call to love God and the poor more than possessions. And their generosity will glorify God and transform the world.

For information on the Generous Christians Pledge and Campaign (including a packet to guide a personal retreat and a congregational kit to help local churches), contact Evangelicals for Social Action, 10 E. Lancaster Ave., Wynnewood, PA 19096; 800-650-6600; esa@esa-online.org.

Ronald J. Sider is president of Evangelicals for Social Action and author of Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger *(Word, 1998).*

Here, Daddy, I love you

by Richard Maffeo

Visitors never seem to notice the tiny black marble resting alone on a shelf in our family room. They probably think it's nothing more than a common piece of round glass, the kind you find in bags in toy stores. To me, though, it's a treasure.

My son Nathan gave it to me when he was 5. Until then he had kept it safe in a corner of his socks drawer. Whenever he left the house, he carried it in his front jeans pocket. One morning, while I watched television, he marched into the living room clutching his treasure in his fist.

"Here, Daddy." He opened his hand.

"What's this?"

"I love you," he said.

Not sure what to think, I switched off the TV and stared at the marble. It wasn't my birthday or any other special day, yet there he was, offering me his special treasure for no other reason than he loved me.

We've lived in four different homes since that day. In each one I've showcased the marble in a prominent place. Only now, more than a decade after receiving his gift, have I gained a little more insight into the meaning of love-gifts for our Father in heaven.

Because I have struggled with feelings of worthlessness, I wonder how often other Christians also think of themselves as "nobodies." How many view themselves as just one of a million insignificant people scurrying to work, to school, to the supermarket? No one will ever write our names in bold letters on flashing marquees. Outside of a small group of family, friends and acquaintances, no one will ever know we lived and died. What can anyone as unimportant as we are offer our Father in heaven? We own nothing of value … or do we?

What can anyone as unimportant as we are offer our Father in heaven? We own nothing of value … or do we?

To my knowledge, no biblical texts specifically say, "I will mount your love-offering on my shelf." Nevertheless, after walking with the Lord for more than a quarter-century, I am convinced of this much: Our Father in heaven is as moved by our willingness to give him ourselves as I was when Nathan offered me his treasure. I believe God proudly showcases to the angels our love-gifts of talents, time, finances, pleasures—the things some of us jealously hide in the corners of our drawers or carry in our pockets. I am certain God is well pleased when we open our hands and say, "Here, Daddy. I love you."

Richard Maffeo lives in San Diego.

The bank of mom

How to teach children to save and give

by Lynn Miller

In a recent *Atlantic Monthly* article, Dave Owens writes that he was dismayed and disheartened by his children's lack of interest in savings. The problem, he decided, was just that, a lack of interest, or at least enough interest to get his kids interested in saving.

Using one of the common computer checkbook systems, he started the Bank of Dave. There, deposited money earned 5 percent per month, instead of the paltry 3 percent per year they were getting at the local savings and loan. That meant that a $10 gift from Grandma would earn a little over 50 cents a month, instead of the 2 1/2 cents they would get at the local bank. Now you can do something with 50 cents when you are 6 or 7 years old.

At Dave's bank, or let's call it the "Bank of Mom," deposits are received at any time of the day, in any amount. Owens says his kids got so fervent about saving that if they found a dime on the sidewalk they would immediately give it to him and demand that it be deposited and that interest be compounded from that very day.

Good savers: At the Bank of Mom, any child can make any size withdrawal at any time of the day. If you pay your kids to do chores or give them an allowance, deposit the funds directly into their account in the Bank of Mom and give them regular dinnertime reports on current balances and that day's direct deposits. Dave Owens reports that not only did his kids become such good savers that he had to reduce the interest rate as they grew in age, they also became "value-oriented" consumers, unwilling to throw away their own interest-earning money on check-out counter trinkets that might be broken before the day was over.

Most importantly, at the Bank of Mom, regular proportional giving should be practiced. Dave Owens didn't do this, but we must. Children learn gratitude and charity from their parents, and they must practice it at the Bank of Mom. Therefore, whenever a deposit is made a reminder and a gift are also made: a reminder to the child of God's extravagant goodness, and a firstfruits gift from the child to God in gratitude for the gift of Jesus Christ.

Money management doesn't make any sense unless God is at the root of it all. Mom may be the president and accountant and head teller at the Bank of Mom, but God must be the chair of the board. Stewardship is a worship issue, not an economic issue. It is an act of thanksgiving to God for what God has already given—not for what we hope to receive in the future but for what we have already received. And any economic transaction without both the reminder and the firstfruits gift is an incomplete transaction at the Bank of Mom.

In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, the apostle Paul encourages the church at Corinth to give generously to the collection being taken for the church in Jerusalem. But the most surprising part of over two full chapters of fund-raising is what Paul doesn't say. He doesn't say anything about the great need at Jerusalem. He doesn't say anything about what the money is going for or how deserving the recipients are.

Correct motivation: Paul tells them that the motivation for their giving is that they have already received so much, that they have been enriched for all generosity, that their generosity is a thanksgiving to God, a sign of their obedience to their own commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the visible evidence of the surpassing grace of God in them. Then he gives us the only correct motivation for all we do in the name of stewardship: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift" (9:15).

If the Bank of Mom has deposit slips, this verse should be at the bottom: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."

When the first 10 percent is separated from the savings account and included in the family's firstfruits gift for the next Sunday, everyone involved should say, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."

And when the offering plate is passed around the sanctuary and finally brought back to the center of the gathered community to be given to God, everyone in the church should stand before God, raise their voices and their arms and say with a loud, fervent voice, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."

Amazing. All this worship coming from something that started at the Bank of Mom.

> Stewardship is a worship issue, not an economic issue. It is an act of thanksgiving to God for what God has already given—not for what we hope to receive in the future but for what we have already received.

Lynn Miller serves as stewardship minister for Mennonite Mutual Aid and lives near Bluffton, Ohio.

Temple tantrum

Jesus warns against the temptation of institutionalism.

by Ryan Ahlgrim

Whether the problem was profit-making in a sacred precinct or religious hypocrisy or Gentile exclusion or unspiritual worship, all of it boiled down to a religion that had lost its way in the gray maze of an institution.

For many Mennonites it is the most troubling thing Jesus ever did. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus walked into the temple courtyard and overturned tables and chairs, scattered money and drove out people and animals. According to the Gospel of John, he even made a whip and used it to help clear the area.

Popularly known as "The Cleansing of the Temple," it made a strong enough impression on the earliest Christians that every Gospel writer felt obliged to report it. But why did Jesus do it? What provoked such prophetic wrath from a man who said to turn the other cheek? Nobody knows for sure. Even the earliest Christians could not agree on why Jesus cleansed the temple. In fact, each of the Gospels interprets the meaning of Jesus' action in a different way.

Luke: For instance, in Luke's brief account, Jesus drives out "those who were selling things," and then, quoting Jeremiah, Jesus says, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers" (19:45-46). Many commentators have speculated that the sellers in the temple must have been overcharging the pilgrims who were there to offer sacrifices. The Laws of Moses required special types of animals for sacrifice. For pilgrims coming from great distances, it was difficult to bring such animals, so they needed to purchase their sacrificial animals near the temple. Thus the animal sellers were in a position to take advantage of the out-of-town pilgrims and charge them inflated rates.

But Luke gives no hint that overcharging was the problem, nor does Luke show any interest in what the sellers were selling (money changers and animal sellers are mentioned by the other Gospels, but not by Luke). For Luke, the product and its purpose are beside the point. It is the act of selling itself—within the temple precincts—that is being criticized. Most likely, Luke believes that Jesus was outraged because worship at the temple had been turned into a business, no matter how legitimate that business was.

The central purpose of the temple—to pray—had been undermined by the economic rewards of business. According to Luke, who frequently focuses on the destructive nature of money, religion and profit-making simply cannot mix.

Matthew: Matthew reports that Jesus "drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple" (21:12). According to Matthew, Jesus was denouncing everyone in the temple, both sellers and pilgrims. The entire temple, with all its people preparing to worship, was a "den of robbers" (21:13). A den of robbers is not where people are robbed but the hideout robbers go to. In other words, Jesus (like Jeremiah) was calling the temple a hideout for sinners.

Apparently Matthew believes Jesus rejected those who were coming to the temple and going through all the exterior motions of religion without any interior transformation. He was denouncing people who were pretending to be religious, playing the game of holy ritual, but who were morally unchanged. According to Matthew, who frequently focuses on the sin of hypocrisy, religion can never be used as a cover-up for moral injustice.

Mark: In Mark's account, Jesus says, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (11:17). Mark is the only Gospel that includes those four final words. In Greek, "nations" is the same word as "Gentiles." Mark perhaps believes that Jesus was saying that the temple is a place for Gentiles as well as Jews to worship. But how could they? The outer courtyard, the only place where Gentiles were allowed to worship, was crowded with money changers, sellers and noisy animals. Jesus may have been objecting that it was impossible for Gentiles to worship amid all the bustle and business going on in the outer courtyard. Mark, who has a special interest in Gentiles, may have understood the cleansing of the temple in this way.

John: John approaches the story in yet another way. Like Luke, he says nothing about the buyers. The focus of Jesus' rage is solely on those selling sacrificial animals and those exchanging coins. Jesus shouts, "Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" (2:16). When he is challenged, Jesus says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19). John then makes it clear that Jesus is referring to himself (2:21).

Jesus is rejecting the sacrificial system of the temple and replacing it with himself. No longer will people be brought into relationship with God through a physical temple and animal sacrifices but through Jesus. According to John, who focuses on worshiping God in spirit and truth, the risen Jesus is the new temple.

So which Gospel writer is right? Which interpretation of the cleansing of the temple is correct? Spiritually speaking, they are all correct. Historically speaking, we will never know for sure. It may be that Jesus meant

National Gallery, London. "Christ Driving

something that is a combination of these explanations. Jesus may have meant something else by his action that none of the Gospel writers perceived. But they do not agree.

Despite their differences about some details and the specific meaning of the cleansing of the temple, however, the images from all four Gospels converge on one idea: Jesus was opposing the institutionalism of religion. Whether the problem was profit-making in a sacred precinct or religious hypocrisy or Gentile exclusion or unspiritual worship, all of it boiled down to a religion that had lost its way in the gray maze of an institution.

As soon as rules are established, boundaries set and procedures agreed on, an institution is born. This is not wrong in itself; in fact, it has to be that way. If Christians did away with all rules, boundaries and procedures, we would not have a church but a movement. Movements can be wonderful, but they do not last. If we want something to last, and if we want our religion to last, it has to become an institution. The church is an institution, and so was the temple. But Jesus was not rejecting the temple because it had become an institution, nor does Jesus reject the church today because it has become an institution. What Jesus was rejecting was institutionalism—a tendency among all institutions to lose their heart and soul. Jesus opposed this in the temple and opposes it in the church today.

Many temptations pull an institution toward institutionalism, but three constantly threaten the church.

Wealth: The first is for money to influence religious values and decisions. For instance, a wealthy church member agrees to give his congregation a large donation provided it is used to renovate the pipe organ, even though the congregation wants to use the money to open a soup kitchen. In such a situation the church must choose its mission and ministries based on spiritual discernment, not on whether it can secure a special donation. A similar example would be if several members decided to withhold their money from the church, hoping to coerce the church into changing its mission. Church leadership tends to cave in. But this is a mistake. Money must have no voice when making spiritual decisions. Jesus repeatedly warns against the insidious ways money influences the way we practice our religion.

Legalism: The second temptation is for the letter of the law to replace the spirit of the law. Every religion needs rules. But institutionalism literalizes the rules, and they dominate all other considerations. Jesus resists this tendency. He announces that even the Law of God must be interpreted according to God's intent. Among other things, this means that carrying out the Law must be congruent with the practice of love. Jesus, Paul and James all agree that the Law is summed up in "Love your neighbor as yourself." The sacred rules are not abolished. We need them and follow them. But the Spirit shows us how to follow them in true love and justice.

Pride: The third temptation is for the church to lose its humility. Christian communities have a tendency to believe they own God and have exclusive rights to dispense God. But sometimes Jesus was less than enthused with his own followers. As John tells us at the end of his account of the cleansing of the temple, "Many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them ... for he himself knew what was in everyone" (2:23-24). Frankly, Jesus may not trust us, not even those of us who believe in his name.

The church has a sacred mission to proclaim Jesus Christ and make him known so that people can see God, be reconciled to God and become part of the community of God. This is the best mission an institution can have. But we must not become so arrogant that we believe only we possess Jesus and the way to God. Jesus had to warn his own disciples about trying to stop those who were not following him but were doing the work of Jesus nonetheless (Mark 9:38-41). It is always possible that Jesus has "other sheep that do not belong to this fold" (John 10:16).

The cleansing of the temple is a key event, one that has vital meaning for the church at all times. If we fail to see how it opposes our own religious institutionalism, then Jesus will be overturning our own tables.

The fact that all four Gospels record and reflect on the cleansing of the temple indicates it is a key event, one that has vital meaning for the church at all times. If we fail to see how it opposes our own religious institutionalism, then Jesus will be overturning our own tables.

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Gap, Pa., relief sale observes 50th anniversary

GAP, Pa.—The Mennonite Central Committee Relief Auction in Gap celebrated its 50th anniversary Aug. 7-8 like it wanted to: raising $50,000 for the work of MCC. While final figures are not yet available, early estimates place proceeds at $51,000. Among the items sold were a watercolor of Sam Summer's farm, the site of the first sale, and a wood chest with an engraving of the Summer farm.

The Gap sale is one of the oldest in the United States and features strong Amish support. "They take good ownership of it," says sale board member John Hostetler.

The sale was held annually until 1989, when the decision was made to hold it biennially. —*MCC News Service*

Bluffton professor arrested on CPT assignment

CHICAGO—Jim Satterwhite, a history and philosophy professor at Bluffton (Ohio) College, was arrested Aug. 4 while on a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) assignment in Hebron, West Bank.

Satterwhite and other CPT members tried to help a Palestinian family salvage tomatoes from their garden from which Israeli military authorities were removing irrigation lines. Satterwhite was detained when he picked up a piece of irrigation pipe to prevent it from being confiscated. Charged with interfering with the military, he was held for four hours at a local police station before being released on his own recognizance.—*CPT News Service*

EMM photo by Jerry Stutzman

Reaching the other side

Hannah Good strolls across a new footbridge between the Maasai community of Olepolos and the town of Ololulunga in southern Kenya. Good's father, Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Clair Good, helped construct the bridge, which will allow access during the rainy season. The Goods have served in evangelism and church planting since last August. The first baptism of local Maasai believers was in May, with a second baptism on Aug. 16.

School named among best for African-Americans

GOSHEN, Ind.—Goshen College has been included in the new guide *The 100 Best Colleges for African-American Students* by Erlene B. Wilson. The book recognized the school for stating that racial intolerance is "inconsistent with the life and teachings of Christ and will be addressed as a serious violation of campus standards."

Colleges cited by the book range from Ivy League schools to state universities to predominantly African-American schools.

Bethel names director of advancement

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Sondra Bandy Koontz has accepted the position of director of advancement at Bethel College, effective Sept. 7. She will coordinate the college's relationships with the public and direct the current capital campaign.

Koontz is head of the art, music and audiovisual services at the Wichita (Kan.) Public Library. She is a 1970 Bethel graduate and has a master's degree in library science from Indiana University at Bloomington.

Grant to fund study of EMU preserve

HARRISONBURG, Va.—A seven-acre preserve on the edge of the Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) campus in Harrisonburg will be the object of study during the next 10 months, thanks to a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry, the U.S. Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters.

According to the project director, Kenton K. Brubaker, professor emeritus of biology at EMU, the site, known as Park Woods, is an excellent example of original plant life in the central Shenandoah Valley. Beginning this fall, EMU, assisted by students from an ecology course, will conduct a study of the trees, shrubs, soil and wildflowers in the woods. In the spring, the study's results will be discussed in two community conferences, and recommendations will be made to make the preserve more attractive and increase its value as an arboretum.

Events

Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church, Paradise, Pa., centennial celebration, Sept. 19-20. Contact: Naomi Carper, 717-687-0567.

Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians annual meeting, Sept. 18-19, Maple Glen Mennonite Church, Grantsville, Md. Contact: 301-895-4488.

Brethren/Mennonite Council biennial convention, Oct. 9-12, Bolton, Ont. Contact: 612-722-6906 or BMCouncil@aol.com

Power and Authority in the Mennonite Church, Consultation II, Oct. 15-17, Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont. Contact: Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, 519-669-4991.

Workers

Adams, Ron, was installed Aug. 2 as pastor of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Brunk, Truman H., concluded a pastorate Aug. 9 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Births

Brenneman, Kylie Nicole, July 30, to Christy (Augustine) and Jim Brenneman, Newton, Kan.

Hathaway, Cambridge Wayne, July 22, to Linda (Schweitzer) and Tim Hathaway, Wellman, Iowa.

Heddin, Rebecca Joy, Aug. 6, to Frances (Hermstein) and Jon Heddin, Hesston, Kan.

Hooley, Tianna Faith, July 31, to Casey and Tanya (Rice) Hooley, Albany, Ore.

Horst, Kolton Michael, July 27, to Cheri (Kolb) and Nevin Horst, Ephrata, Pa.

Horst-Martz, Jonathan Amos, Aug. 10, to Jenny-Anne and Galen Horst-Martz, Germantown, Pa.

Ils, Haylee Marie, July 27, to Brad and Trina (King) Ils, Albany, Ore.

Kroeker, Megan Lee, July 25, to Cara (Stolepart) and Paul Kroeker, Henderson, Neb.

Kropf, Colton Lynn, July 29, to Barbara (Miller) and Ernie Kropf, Albany, Ore.

Rasmussen, Berit Margaret Hudson, Aug. 5, to Bob Hudson and Rachel Rasmussen, Champaign, Ill.

Regier, Jacob Paul, June 11, to Alan and Kari (Esh) Regier, West Liberty, Ohio.

Roth, Joel Alan, July 23, to Amber (Neuschwander) and Scott Roth, Albany, Ore.

Roth, Micah Kramer, July 26, to Daryl and Stephanie (Kramer) Roth, Waterloo, Ont.

Shima, Zachary Todd, July 23, to Doug and Michelle (Wiebe) Shima, Topeka, Kan.

Steingard, Ellie Beth, July 26, to Deanna (Volk) and Gary Steingard, Henderson, Neb.

Troyer, Emerson Kate, July 27, to Doyle and LeAnn (Blenden) Troyer, Boise, Idaho.

Unruh, Luke Benjamin, July 28, to Diane (Graber) and Fred Unruh, Newton, Kan.

Voth, Jonathan Isaac, May 25, to Beth Anne (Scobbie) and Donley Voth, Grand Blanc, Mich.

Weaver, Samuel Miller, July 29, to William Miller and Debora Weaver, New Hill, N.C.

Weber, Matthew Lamar, July 26, to Arnold and Sandra Weber, Alma, Ont.

Marriages

Balaban/Todd: Jason Balaban, Henderson, Neb., and Anna Todd, Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 8, by Elton Berg.

Bender/McNeil: Kelby Bender, Kalona, Iowa, and Leann McNeil, Ainsworth, Iowa, July 25, by Mick Murray.

Brinson/Milton: Anthony Brinson and Jassica Milton, Goshen, Ind., June 20, by Firman Gingerich.

Harshberger/Ross: Cindy Harshberger, South Bend, Ind., and Tylor Christian Ross, Nyles, Mich., July 4, by Philip Abram.

King/Vonada: Dale King, Belleville, Pa., and Heidi Vonada, Belleville, July 25, by Timothy Martin.

King/Westover: Crystal King, Belleville, Pa., and Andrew Westover, Belleville, July 25, by Ivan Yoder.

Luth/Siebert: Amber Luth, Seward, Neb., and Jason Siebert, Henderson, Neb., Aug. 1, by Andrew Menke.

Morton/Ninomiya: Scott Morton, Kitchener, Ont., and Melody Ninomiya, Waterloo, Ont., June 13, by Barb Smith-Morrison.

Reinert/Thiessen: Heather Reinert, Inman, Kan., and Greg Thiessen, Inman, Aug. 1, by Dean Linsenmeyer.

Roth/Sawatzky: Rachel Roth, Akron, Pa., and David Sawatzky, Newton, Kan., Aug. 1, by Dawn Yoder Harms.

Schrock/Stuckey: Steven Schrock, Cincinnati, and Kim Stuckey, Cincinnati, Aug. 1, by Douglas Zehr.

Weaver/Zercher: Valerie Weaver, Ephrata, Pa., and David Zercher, Grantham, Pa., June 27, by Keith Graber Miller.

Wissler/Yoder: Derek Wissler, Lancaster, Pa., and Melissa Yoder, Christiana, Pa., June 20, by Linford King.

Deaths

Boll, Edna, 87, Manheim, Pa., died July 8 of respiratory failure. Survivors: children Clarence, David, Eugene, Marian Metzler, Velma Schnupp, Dorothy Witmer; 23 grandchildren. Burial: July 11 at Manheim by Donald Nauman, Jay Peters and Dale Schnupp.

Brenneman, Clark, 90, Kalona, Iowa, died July 30. Survivors: children Richard, George, Jay Stewart; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 3 at Kalona by Scott Swartzendruber.

Brubaker, Esther Leaman, 87, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 4. Survivors: son Harlan; stepchildren Frances Habecker, John; one grandchild; 17 stepgrandchildren; 43 stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 7 at Mount Joy, Pa., by Donald Good, Joe Sherer and Shelley Shellenberger.

Friesen, Henry R., 90, died Aug. 5. Survivors: wife, Ann; children Charles, Deborah Knickerbocker; two grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 10 at Henderson, Neb., by John Yoder-Schrock.

Henderson, Margaret Campbell, 72, Lyndhurst, Va., died July 25. Survivors: husband, Earl; son, Ronald; three grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; two stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: July 28 at Waynesboro, Va., by William Hatter and Vance Brydge.

Kuhns, Carrie F., 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 28. Survivors: children Miriam Kauffman, Marie Hertzler, Joyce Harshberger; Donald; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 1 at Harrisonburg by Charles Heatwole.

Miller, Millie Stutzman, 90, Wayland, Iowa, died July 19 of congestive heart failure. Survivors: children Evelyn Yeackley, Keith, Earlis, Betty Grieser, Wilma Steckly, Janice Roth; 24 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Burial: July 23 at Wayland by Phil Slabaugh.

Miller, Milton, 83, Wayland, Iowa, died July 19. Survivors: wife, Verdella; children Ray, William, Donald; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 23 at Wayland by Phil Slabaugh.

Miller, Vesta, 86, Goshen, Ind., died July 28. Survivors: husband, Paul; children Elaine Haines, Eleanor, James; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Aug. 3 at Pettisville, Ohio by Nancy Kauffmann.

Shank, Raymond, 77, Sarasota, Fla., died July 30. Survivors: wife, Odela; children Galen, Marlin, Leon, Lorraine Borntrager, Wanda Bouwman; 15 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 4 by Marlin Thomas.

Correction: Susan Freed and Dean were omitted as surviving children of Frank Moyer in the July 28 *The Mennonite.*

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Classifieds

Bethel Mennonite Church, Gettysburg, Pa., seeks a ***pastor*** beginning Sept. 1, 1999. Average attendance is about 75. Send resume or call for information: Lois Whisler, 10 Panther Drive, Hanover, PA 17331; 717-637-8062.

Waynesboro Mennonite Church seeks ***minister of youth and Christian education.*** For more information contact Stan Kauffman, Rt. 6 Box 56K, Waynesboro, VA 22980; 540-943-1324; email sdkauffman@juno.com.

Penn View Christian School has a ***science*** faculty position opening in the middle school for the 1998-99 school year. Please send your resume to Robert D. Rutt, executive director, Penn View Christian School, 420 Cowpath Road, Souderton, PA 18964; 215-723-1196.

Conklin Company, Inc., is interviewing for ***independent marketing representatives*** in Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa. Opportunity for promotion into sales management. Excellent commissions. We train. Agricultural or construction experience a plus.

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For immediate consideration, send resume to Culinary Service Network, Inc., 1730 Walton Road Suite 100, Blue Bell, PA 19422; fax 610-828-2328. EOE

Bluffton College seeks ***vice president for advancement.*** Position opens Oct. 1, 1998. Qualifications include commitment to the mission of a Mennonite church-affiliated liberal arts college, demonstrated success in fund-raising and experience in administration. The position includes supervision of all institutional advancement activities including major gifts, grant writing, planned and annual giving, alumni, communications and capital campaigns. An advanced degree is desired.

For more information, see http://www.bluffton.edu. Submit letter of application, resume and four references to President's Office, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. EOE. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church, Paradise, Pa., will hold its ***centennial celebration*** Sept. 19-20. Church history book available. Call 717-687-0433.

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking a ***Mennonite Foundation representative*** for the Lancaster, Pa., area and also the Harleysville, Pa., region. The Foundation provides planned giving support to an established donor constituency and charitable institutions. Qualifications for the positions include the ability to understand and communicate financial and estate planning concepts, good presentation skills, willingness to obtain securities licensure and earn CFP or other professional designations, and a willingness to travel 25 to 30 percent. MMA offers a competitive salary and excellent benefits.

Send or fax letter of interest along with resume to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 219-533-5264.

Goshen College—Immediate hire: Outstanding opportunity in a caring and supportive Christian environment for a ***human resource professional.*** Goshen College, recognized by several independent sources as one of the top private liberal arts colleges in the country, is seeking a director of human resources to provide leadership for the management and development of Goshen College's human resources. Specific responsibilities include: development and implementation of human resource program and policies, overseeing the employment process for administrative and hourly employees, administration of fringe benefit programs, assuring compliance with government regulations and serving as affirmative action officer.

Requirements: Bachelor's degree with concentration in human resources or other business or human services-related fields required; master's degree preferred; at least two years experience in the human resource field preferred. Skills in communication, attention to detail, ability to work independently and in team relationships, computer/word processing experience required.

Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. People from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Interested people should send a letter of interest, resume and three references to Jim Histand, vice president for finance, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7456; fax 219-535-7060; email jimlh@goshen.edu.

Mennonite Board of Missions is searching for interested, qualified people to fill the following staff positions:

Prayer ministry coordinator volunteer: A person with passion for mission, vision and commitment to a life of prayer and good writing skills is needed to lead MBM's prayer ministry. This person will nurture prayer by meeting and praying with new and returning personnel, writing the monthly prayer calendar and Prayer Partners Memo, and facilitating and expanding the prayer partner network. This is a half-time volunteer position. A stipend is available.

Writer for mission education and communication (full-time): A person is needed to write educational, informational and inspirational materials as well as story resources about mission for use in congregations. Good writing skills are essential; a bachelor's degree in communications is preferred. Experience in writing for children is helpful.

Qualifications for the above positions include experience with word processing. Also needed are creativity, initiative, flexibility, attention to detail and ability to communicate with sensitivity and compassion. Interested people should be positive team workers, committed Christians, and part of a local congregation. Cross-cultural mission or service experience is helpful; knowledge of MBM and understanding and commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs preferred.

Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Anyone interested in one of the above positions please contact Rachel L. Stoltzfus by calling 219-294-7523; email rachells@mbm.org; or writing to Mennonite Board of Missions, P.O. Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

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by Rich Preheim

Taking a ride

Remember Herbert W. Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God (WCG)? Armstrong, the self-described end-time Elijah, taught that his followers would become gods, claimed that the United States and Great Britain descended from two tribes of Israel and declared that the world would end in 1975.

Who would have thought that the WCG would someday be accepted into the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)? Certainly not cult watcher James Beverley. But writing in *Faith Today,* he is more than happy to proclaim WCG's "dizzying and painful but liberating ride from cult to legitimate church," thanks to God's miraculous grace.

Beverley, a theology and ethics professor at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, notes the WCG's transformation under Joseph W. Tkach Sr., who became church leader after Armstrong's death in 1986, and Joseph Tkach Jr., who followed his father after he died three years ago. The WCG joined the NAE last year and this year became a member in the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

"It's amazing what God can do," Beverley writes, "even in cult land."

The return of civil religion

What's good for believers of Mohammed is good for followers of Jesus, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches apparently believes. So the organization is requesting the government to declare Zimbabwe a "Christian nation."

"Other countries have declared themselves Muslim countries, and why should we not be proud to declare our country a Christian nation?" said the council's general secretary, Densen Mafinyane, in *The Christian Century.*

The council represents Zimbabwe's mainstream Protestant churches but does not include any of the Mennonite or Brethren in Christ groups in the country. According to Zimbabwe's constitution, the country is secular with freedom of worship.

Presbythuran? Lutherterian?

Maybe this is the kind of hybrid that can only be cooked up in God's laboratory.

In an unusual cross-denominational merger, Zion Lutheran and First Presbyterian churches in Dolgeville, N.Y., this summer dissolved their congregations and formed United Lutheran Presbyterian Parish. The new congregation is affiliated with both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

While the merger came just days after the two denominations entered into "full communion" with each other—allowing for greater cooperation in worship and missions and for exchange of ministers—the two congregations have been moving together for several decades, reports *The Lutheran.* It all started 25 years ago, when both congregations had pastoral vacancies and called one minister to fill both. They have since moved into one building and now hold joint services, alternating between Lutheran and Presbyterian liturgies.

Sex, medicine and the church

The makers of Viagra were probably not terribly worried about this, but several Costa Rican church leaders have given their approval to the controversial pill for masculine impotency.

The Roman Catholic archbishop, Roman Arrieta, has said the use of Viagra "by husbands who suffer impotency will contribute to a happy marriage," and therefore the "faithful can use it," reports *Latin American Ecumenical News Service.* Arrieta added that using Viagra can stabilize marriages because the inability to "consummate the marital act" can prompt the "affected party to seek a relationship with a third person."

Pentecostal pastor Guyon Massey was in agreement but also not naive. In a culture where machismo can run rampant, he said it would be an illusion to believe that Viagra would be used only by married couples. "To think that this will happen," he said, "is to cover the sun with one finger."

Just checking

Given the Internal Revenue Service's sullied reputation, this shouldn't surprise us, although it probably should offend us: After years of trying to resolve the issue, Grace Montgomery, a Quaker war-tax resister from Stamford, Conn., is calling for an investigation after the IRS illegally cashed a photocopy of a check not even made out to the IRS.

According to the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund newsletter, Montgomery each year places the military portion of her federal income tax in a Quaker escrow account. The IRS then usually levies her bank account for the amount owed. But in 1993, the IRS cashed a photocopy of Montgomery's check to the escrow account. Her bank accepted it even though it was not genuine and was made out to "The Religious Society of Friends."

Tidbits

- The cities with the largest Jewish populations are: New York, 1.9 million; Los Angeles, 585,000; Miami, 535,000; Jerusalem, 422,000; and Paris, 350,000. (*Context*)
- Most church steeples today are made of fiberglass. (*Your Church*)
- Of the 405 Church of the Nazarene congregations in India, 286, or 71 percent, have been started in the last five years. (*World Mission*)
- The top three causes of church fires are defective or improperly used heating equipment, 28.5 percent; electrical faults, 20.3 percent; and arson or suspected arson, 16.8 percent. (*ChristianWeek*)
- There are 1,240 radio stations in the United States airing religious content full time, an increase of more than 30 percent in the last 10 years. (*National Catholic Reporter*)

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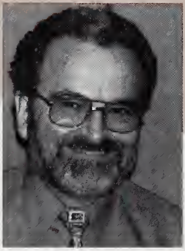

J. Lorne Peachey

An action plan for enemies

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy" (Matthew 5:43). *But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you* (Luke 6:27-28).

Of all the sayings of Jesus, these verses have to be some of the most difficult. The church has struggled for two millennia to know how to practice them. With good reason. For Jesus also says we must love our enemies in order to belong to God (see Matthew 5:44-45).

Now I want to be a child of God's. That means loving my enemies. How? I've found it helpful to approach the task in five steps:

1. Admit that I have enemies. This is something I find most difficult to do. I want everyone to like me, to be my friend. It's hard to admit that this just isn't so.

Jesus didn't promise that we wouldn't have enemies. What he did tell us is to love the enemies we will have. For me, the first step in that loving is to admit that I have them.

2. Identify my enemies. It isn't enough to admit I have enemies; I must also name them by name, put faces on these enemies I am to love.

Too often I let others name my enemies for me. Today the U.S. government tells me, for example, that the Iraqis are my enemies. So I am tempted to think that I have taken care of Jesus' command about enemies by saying I love the Iraqi people—and meaning it, too.

Separated from me by beliefs, practices and traditions, there are some people I'd just as soon not have around—probably the simplest definition of enemy I can think of.

But enemies are comfortable as long as they are far away. Those I really don't get along with are much closer to home: in my conference, my congregation, my community, my family. Separated from me by beliefs, practices and traditions, there are some people I'd just as soon not have around—probably the simplest definition of enemy I can think of.

Yet to call these people enemies is difficult. I found out just how difficult recently while reading through the Psalms—a book I discovered to have as many condemnations of enemies as it does praises to God. The only way I could make these enemy passages meaningful was to put actual names in them—an experience that almost made me sweat!

3. Admit to my feelings about my enemies. Having identified my enemies, I immediately want to grit my teeth and start loving them. But it doesn't work that way. Until I admit to my feelings of anger, disappointment, frustration, even hatred, I won't be able to love—I'll only be able to grit my teeth.

The Psalms are helpful to me in identifying these feelings about enemies. So is this song by an unknown Old Testament poet: "I beat them fine like the dust of the earth, I crushed them and stamped them down like the mire of the streets" (2 Samuel 22:43).

4. Bring my feelings to God. I have found no better way to take care of my feelings than with the prayer Jesus taught his disciples: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us" (Matthew 6:12). Not always but often I find healing release when I can pray this prayer in sincerity and in truth.

5. Begin to love. Having identified my enemies, named them, admitted to my feelings about them and given these to God, then I am ready to begin to follow Jesus' command to love. How? Jesus gives me several ways in Matthew 5 and Luke 6.

The apostle Paul makes loving one's enemies even more concrete. Give them food and drink, he writes in Romans 12:20. Be hospitable. Bring them into your home and treat them as guests.

"Stop!" I want to say. This is more than enough. Loving is hard work—even for those easy to love. How much more difficult it is for one's enemies.

Yet I find Jesus' words ones I need to come back to often these days. My world would push me into taking sides and defending positions. Unfortunately, that spirit is also creeping into the church in the name of truth and right.

Jesus invites me to a better way. When people set themselves against me, then I know what I have to do. My Master has given me an action plan for dealing with enemies.—*jlp*

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give thanks for widows and widowers

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Diversity's needs

The need to describe the shape of "greater unity for greater mission" led Pacific Southwest Conference to adopt a polity statement at its June assembly ("Pacific Southwest Adopts Polity Statement after Dropping No-Discipline Position," July 14). While *The Mennonite* missed the whole point of the assembly by focusing 5 1/2 paragraphs of a seven-paragraph story on the polity statement, it did an even larger disservice to the denomination by failing to accurately report the context that birthed the polity statement.

For those of us who seek to be faithful to Jesus in a postmodern, urban, multiethnic society, mission and identity are intertwined. The intersection of mission (what we do) and identity (who we are) is polity (how we do and be). Thus, the polity statement is the servant of conference mission and Anabaptist identity, a tool for holding us together, not for separating us.

Of the 29 congregations in the Southern California region of Pacific Southwest, eight churches are less than two years old, and 22 are less than 20 years old. Only five congregations are mostly European-American. Only one in nine active participants is of European descent, and only one-third of them have roots in Mennonite churches "back east." No pastor serving a Southern California Mennonite congregation is a graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. In short, since 1980, an indigenous Anabaptist-Mennonite church movement has begun to sprout in Southern California. This church needs an understanding of what it means to be a conference grounded in a contemporary intersection of Scripture-formed identity and mission in the name of Christ, not in the family feuds of a sectarian past.—*Jeff Wright, Pacific Southwest area minister for Southern California, Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.*

Three Gods?

"Educating Christians, Muslims" (Aug. 11) says, "Muslims are often surprised to find that Christians worship one God, not three." I believe that theologically "orthodox" Christians do worship three gods. If the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct persons, there's no logical reason not to call these three persons three Gods.

Non-Trinitarian Christians believe in one God, the Father, and that Jesus is the messenger of God foretold in the Old Testament, and that the Holy Spirit is the power of God. Muslims would have no trouble agreeing with these definitions. I suspect even some Jews might be more open-minded about Jesus as Messiah if they weren't required to see him as deity. The first step toward more unity among the three great monotheistic religions would be for Christianity to abandon Trinitarianism and become monotheistic in fact instead of only in name.—*Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

Take simplicity to heart

I just had to write and commend you on your selection of the article "Simplicity Isn't Simple" by Jamie Molitoris (Aug. 11). If every parent and grandparent could read and take to heart the premise contained therein, our children would grow up with a greater sense of what is important and valuable in this life. Thanks for reminding us again of what we all know but so easily forget in this pervasive atmosphere of advertising.—*Freda Zehr, Wilmington, Del.*

Oil's well that ends well

Without detracting at all from the well-stated points of racism and prejudice made in the July 14 issue ("Justice Down the Bayou"), one point seems too big. In fact, 22 billion is so big that divided by the days in 77 years it is still more than 782,00 barrels of oil per day! That being possibly the daily capacity of the Alaska oil pipeline. I conclude there must be a misunderstanding somewhere. Could someone check the facts?—*Elton Kauffman, Bluesky, Alta.*

Editor's note: The article should have said 22 million—not 22 billion—barrels of oil have been taken from that particular well in Grandma Rosalee's front yard.

Inclusion and exclusion

The issue of homosexual inclusion is indeed a very complex issue with good people on both sides. Either one rejects the painful moves of conferences to expel churches or else rejects homosexuals. It seems that the Mennonite Church is becoming a church where inclusion is more important than doctrine. While Christ did pray for unity, in the same prayer he also said that the disciples were in the world but not part of it. A separation. An exclusion.

In Revelation the beast makes war against those who still follow the commands of Jesus. I have seen Paul attacked and statements made to exclude Paul from the Bible for disagreeing

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s say readers say

with homosexuality. His meanings have been reinterpreted to fit the current political correctness. Have we gone so far that we rationalize commandments and nullify them in order to accept everyone? Will the new Mennonite Church stand for anything?—*James Miser, Casper, Wyo.*

How naive many of us were when we voted for integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church. We thought integration meant bringing the pieces together to make a more beautiful whole. We never imagined that it would come to mean absorption, never thought that all of our congregations would be required to be formed into the same cookie-cutter shape by the domination of people who are living and working at least 300 miles from our inner-city churches.

During the 1500s, my forefathers became a part of the Anabaptists to escape Rome's domination. Are we gong to have a new kind of domination? Does integration mean inclusion or exclusion?—*Russell Welty, Stockbridge, Ga.*

Missing pieces

I find *The Mennonite* to be a very attractive publication. It is an excellent news magazine, informing us of the activities of the wider Mennonite community. I miss very much the thought-provoking articles that made *Gospel Herald* special for me.—*Marie Snider, St. Jacobs, Ont.*

The obituaries in *The Mennonite* give the dates of our coming and going and where the residue was disposed of. If nothing noteworthy happened between those two events, we may may have been better off stillborn were it not for our begetting.—*Eber Martin, North Lima, Ohio*

Cover photo by Marilyn Nolt

Weathering Indonesia's storm

Unrest stretches and batters Mennonites

As Indonesia continues to swirl in uncertainty, Mennonites in the island country have not been unscathed but also have not had to endure the degree of terror suffered by others.

During the country's current upheaval, spawned by economic and political disintegration, no church members have been killed, beaten or raped, and only one of the nearly 500 churches destroyed has been Mennonite, say Indonesian Mennonite leaders and North American visitors. But congregational life has been shaken; some Mennonites have had their stores and homes vandalized and robbed; and some have made plans to leave Indonesia, although apparently none has done so as yet.

Indonesia is home to 63,000 Mennonites, the fifth-largest population in the world. Two of the country's three Mennonite synods—the 13,000-member GKMI and the 3,500 member JKI—are comprised predominantly of people of Chinese ethnicity, many of whom have been in the country for generations. Chinese Indonesians, considered the country's wealthy, have been targeted by rioters during the turmoil. The third and largest synod, GITJ, is made up of indigenous Javanese.

"When at the same time you are Chinese, Christian and rich, you are a triple minority," says Mesach Krisetya, GKMI's presiding officer and president of Mennonite World Conference.

We live in a very uncertain situation. We know who holds the future—God.

—Mesach Krisetya

Sheldon Sawatzky

Pastor Parawati gives a sermon last month in a GKMI congregation in Jakarta, Indonesia. GKMI is one of three Mennonite synods in Indonesia, the country with the fifth-largest Mennonite population in the world.

"We live in a very uncertain situation," he says. "We know who holds the future—that's God."

Don Jacobs, executive director of Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation, Landisville, Pa., recently returned from visiting Mennonite business and professional people in Indonesia. "In a way, it's a shining hour for the church because it's never been more difficult,"

Asian Mennonites decry Indonesian attacks

The Asia Mennonite Conference has 22 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ member groups from 10 countries: Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Macau, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The conference held its first assembly in 1971.

BALI, Indonesia—While considering the challenges of reaching out to its neighbors, the Asia Mennonite Conference (AMC) has also responded to the domestic challenges of some of its own members.

The conference's 60 delegates, meeting Aug. 3-6 in Bali, passed a resolution denouncing "activities which in any way degrade, dishonor or aim to destroy the lives of Chinese people within Indonesia" during the country's current unrest. Indonesians of Chinese descent have been particularly targeted. Citing the deaths of more than 1,200 people and the rapes of 168 women and girls, the resolution stated, "We the people of the Asia Mennonite Conference believe that women and men are created in the image of God."

The resolution will be submitted to human-rights groups and government agencies.

In one of the morning devotions, new AMC chair Shant Kunjam of India called for the church to be a beacon of hope and encouragement despite rejection, misunderstanding and persecution by the world. He noted that Indonesia, the conference's host country, is the largest Muslim nation in the world and he says. "They're falling back on their faith more than ever."

The condition of church life ranges from looking for new ways to minister to suspending congregational activities. Some congregations are starting or discussing ways to meet victims' needs, including a thrift store and computer on-line assistance for rape victims who become pregnant, reports Andreas Christanday, a GKMI administrator and Asia Mennonite Conference president. Among other church activities are political advocacy and organizing groups for prayer and fasting.

But other congregations are struggling. "Some are very apathetic; some are preparing to [leave Indonesia] in case; some are still doing routine work," Christanday says. "Some are questioning: What should we do? Should we learn self-defense?"

The tensions between Indonesians of Chinese descent and those of indigenous background apparently have not affected relations among the Mennonite synods. "To Chinese Christians or Mennonites, [GITJ] always gives respect," Christanday says.

Sheldon Sawatzky, interim executive secretary of the Commission on Overseas Mission, tells of attending a worship service in the capital city of Jakarta which included Indonesians of both Chinese and Javanese ethnicities. Sawatzky was in Indonesia to attend the Asia Mennonite Conference Aug. 3-6.

Sawatzky also visited a Mennonite's furniture store. "Around his shop were stores and supermarkets that were gutted," he says. "His was spared for some reason."

The only Mennonite church to be destroyed during the current upheaval was burned last November. Another church was torn down by a mob three years ago, and another scrapped plans to dedicate its new sanctuary last October after receiving threats.—*Rich Preheim for Meetinghouse*

Canadians asked to help alleged Nazi collaborator

WINNIPEG—A letter to Mennonite churches and institutions across Canada requesting financial assistance for an accused Nazi collaborator has left church leaders wondering how to respond.

The Canadian government is in the process of stripping Johann Dueck of his citizenship and deporting him. Dueck, who lives in St. Catharines, Ont., is accused of collaborating with the Nazis in the Ukraine during World War II. The government began legal proceedings in 1995, and Dueck's family can no longer afford the legal fees.

Although Dueck is not a member of a Mennonite church, he has strong historic ties to the Mennonites.

"The Canadian Mennonite community was instrumental in helping my father-in-law come to this country," son-in-law R.J. Gillen wrote in the letter. "Within one year of his arrival in Canada, Mr. Dueck repaid the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization all of the costs it paid to bring him and his family to Canada. Now 50 years later, I am asking you to come to his assistance again."

It is understandable that some Mennonites are not sure how to respond, says Marv Frey, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada. "Personal accountability is a basic principle of morality," he says. "Yet at the same time, many Canadian Mennonites remember all too well the atrocities that Mennonites sufferend under Soviet communism."

Frey said MCC Canada has not made a decision about Dueck's defense fund. "We will be consulting further with other Mennonite church organizations about the request," he says. —*MCC Canada News Service*

> We will be consulting further with other Mennonite church organizations about the request.
>
> —*Marv Frey*

that 90 percent of Bali's 3 million people adhere to the Agama Hindu Dharma religion.

At the opening ceremony, outgoing conference chair Andreas Christanday of Indonesia called for Asians to evangelize Asians. With 59 percent of the world's population located in the region, the Asian churches must move from being mission fields to becoming mission forces, he said, and take seriously the commission of Acts 1:8, which indicates simultaneous witness at home and abroad.

"It was refreshing to hear leaders from Asian churches talk about mission and how they can become mission churches," says Sheldon Sawatzky, interim executive secretary of the Commission on Overseas Mission, who attended the conference. "This is a fairly recent emphasis, this interest in becoming a sending church and actually doing it."

The Bali gathering was the fifth AMC assembly. The first was held in India in 1971.

AMC has 22 church group members in 10 countries from Australia to Japan. The conference grew out of young people's work camps organized in the 1960s by Mennonite missionaries. "This was particularly to foster reconciliation between the Japanese and other Asians because of the Japanese occupation of so many other Asian nations [prior to and during World War II]," Sawatzky says.—*Melanie Zuercher for GCMC and MBM news services*

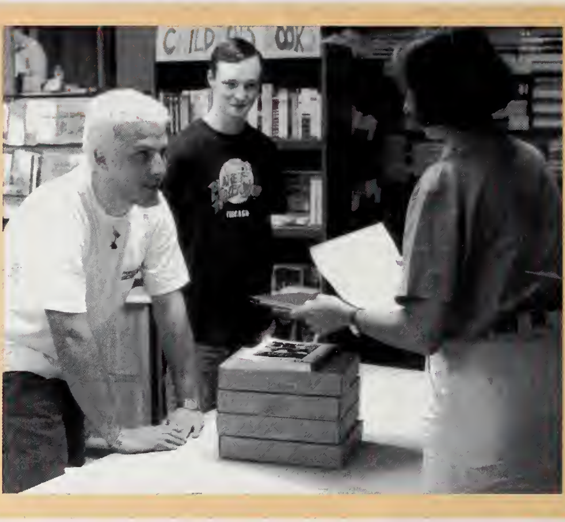
Retired workers recall Tanzania

Twenty-two residents of Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa., who served a total of 404 years in Tanzania, recently recounted some of their experiences in the African country, telling stories and singing in Swahili.

Most of the program participants served with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Others were with Mennonite Central Committee or other agencies.

Elva Landis had the most years of service with 47. Levi Hurst, nearly 95 years old, was the oldest participant.

"Landis Homes was started by Eastern Mennonite Missions as a place for returning missionaries to retire," says program organizer Ivan Leaman. "The persons on this stage today certainly demonstrate a living out of that original vision." —*Deborah Laws-Landis*



Larry Bartel

Buy the book

Hesston (Kan.) College bookstore manager Sharon Mullet (right) retrieves textbooks for student Rafael Bonventi of Sao Paulo, Brazil (left), while Michael Nunemaker of Hesston waits his turn. Hesston was the first Mennonite college to begin the fall semester, starting classes on Aug. 24. Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Goshen (Ind.) College started on Aug. 26. Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., will begin on Sept. 1, and Bluffton (Ohio) College on Sept. 8.

'Fair trade' business stays in business

Ten Thousand Villages is a survivor. As market forces continue to fell other "fair trade" organizations, Mennonite Central Committee's job creation operation is one of a handful that has stayed in business.

"We can't work with suppliers as charities and sell poor-quality products," says Ten Thousand Villages director Paul Myers.

Ten Thousand Villages last year sold $6.8 million of merchandise through church events, relief sales and 125 stores in the United States and Canada.

Among the reasons for Ten Thousand Villages' success are avoiding catalogs, steering clear of the often-fickle clothing market and having $5 million in equity to weather downturns.
—*New York Times*

GC district acts on pastor's credentials

In an action highlighting the complexities of integration, the Eastern District Conference Ministerial Committee has announced it will no longer recognize the ministerial credentials of Richard Lichty, pastor of Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, which welcomes noncelibate homosexuals.

The committee made its decision last December based on a conference statement on sexuality and credentialing adopted three years ago. Germantown responded in May that the congregation "cannot accept" the action. In a letter to Germantown mailed Aug. 14, the committee replied, "On matters in which to us the Scriptures seem quite clear, we are bound by the principles of Scripture and therefore are not free to rescind our decision."

Premarital, extramarital and homosexual sexual activity "are incompatible with Christ's standards," according to Eastern District's statement. "Therefore we cannot grant leadership credentials to, or continue to recognize the leadership credentials of, persons who continue to advocate or practice such conduct contrary to the Scriptures."

Germantown, which was expelled from Franconia Conference last year because of its position on homosexuality, remains a member of Eastern District. Lichty has been pastor at Germantown since 1997. He says the ministerial committee's decision should not affect his day-to-day pastoral ministry.

The General Conference Mennonite Church still recognizes Lichty's credentials, says John Esau of the GC Ministerial Leadership office. "The [Eastern District] Ministerial Committee has never communicated [its] action to the Ministerial Leadership office," he says, "so as far as I'm concerned, Richard Lichty still has his credentials in the General Conference Mennonite Church.".

In the General Conference Mennonite Church, credentials are held by the denomination but processed by the area conferences. That means area conferences have the responsibility of accepting candidates for ordination or accepting pastoral ordinations by other conferences or denominations; area conferences can also withdraw credentials. But conferences will have more responsibility in the integrated church, Esau says.

"Under the new polity now being implemented, the area conferences will not only process a minister's credentials but hold them as well," he says. "Every minister's credentials are now being assigned to the area conference where he or she currently serves."

The issue of whether a pastor can be credentialed by the denomination and not the area conference in the new church has not been resolved, Esau says.—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service with Rich Preheim*

Conventions produce surge in service

ELKHART, Ind.—Last summer, about 4,600 Mennonite teenagers returned home from the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) youth conventions with sunburns and a new commitment to voluntary service. A year later, the sunburns have gone away, but the commitment to serve has not as Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) has seen an increase in applications to summer and year-long service projects.

"We are having the largest year ever in both Youth Venture and Group Venture, and we attribute that to the service emphasis at the Orlando and Winnipeg youth conventions," says Del Hershberger, MBM short-term missions coordinator.

About 4,000 youth attended the MC youth convention in Orlando, Fla., in August, and about 600 were at the GC convention in Winnipeg in July.

Final numbers of 1997-98 Group Venture participants are not yet in, but Hershberger estimates about 1,270 youth have participated, up 70 from the previous high, reached four years ago. Forty-four youth served with Youth Venture, up 10 from two years ago, and 49 served with Service Adventure, up 27 from two years ago.

Group Venture provides short-term service assignments for youth groups and their leaders. Youth Venture offers one- to two-week assignments at one of five North American or two international locations. Service Adventure places youth in a community for 10 1/2 months. These programs are sponsored by MBM and the Commission on Home Ministries.

"I want to tell you how much I enjoyed Orlando and how much closer to God I became," wrote one Service Adventure applicant. "I was one of those that answered the call to give a year of their life for complete service to God."—*Rachel Lewis of MBM News Service*

Iowa youth revive spirit of Orlando convention

WASHINGTON, Iowa—Crooked Creek Christian Camp, Washington, isn't exactly Orlando, Fla. But more than 200 youth and sponsors came to the camp Aug. 1-2 because of similarities with last year's Mennonite Church youth convention.

"We wanted a sort of Orlando echo to keep alive the spirit of convention in the off years ... a focus on spirituality and a sense of community among Mennonite youth," says Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, Iowa-Nebraska Conference youth minister.

The 18-hour retreat featured worship, a guest speaker and recreation. A similar event was held in Nebraska in June. Plans call for the retreats to be part of the regular Iowa-Nebraska calendar and be held in years there is no denominational youth convention.—*Holly Blosser Yoder*

Corrections: Yasir Makki has served two summer service assignments and one service internship, not three internships as reported in "Educating Christians, Muslims" in the Aug. 11 *The Mennonite.*

Goshen (Ind.) College posted a record of $1.64 million in deferred giving last fiscal year, not $5.63 million as reported in "Three Colleges Report Record Giving" in the Aug. 11 *The Mennonite.*

Hispanic groups move closer to integration

DALLAS, Texas—The General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) Hispanic organizations have taken a step closer to merger, adopting a working document for a joint structure.

About 100 Hispanic pastors, their spouses and other delegates representing the GC AMIGA and the MC Hispanic Mennonite Convention (MHC) met jointly in Dallas Aug. 6-9 for only the second time and the first time largely for discussion of integration.

Hispanic Mennonite leaders brought to the meeting a proposal for an integrated structure. Instead of passing the proposal, the two groups adopted it as a working document and agreed to meet again in 2000 or 2001 to try to make a final decision.

The proposal will be sent to both groups' congregations, who should respond in the next 90 days, says Gilberto Flores, director of Hispanic Resource Ministries for the Commission on Home Ministries.

The proposal includes a rationale for integration and an outline for a structure, including a general board made up of representatives from several regions, an executive committee, a delegate body with a moderator, and program areas such as congregational nurture, education, missions, finances and publication. The proposed name for the integrated group is Iglesia Menonita Hispana.

"We [AMIGA and HMC] have some different approaches, but nothing that should hinder the process," Flores says. "We want to retain our Hispanic identity but participate more fully in the church. Now that is more clear for both groups."

AMIGA and HMC include close to 100 congregations in the United States and Canada.
—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

We want to retain our Hispanic identity but participate more fully in the church.

—*Gilberto Flores*

Widows and widowers

People who have lost a spouse are a rich resource of service to a congregation.

by Jim S. Amstutz

During a pastoral visit to a member of my church who was recently widowed, I asked if she had anyone to talk to about all the changes in her life. "Oh, Gerry calls me a lot," she said. Gerry is a neighbor who is also a widow and fellow church member. I recognized in Laura's statement the value of peer ministry and wondered if there was a way to support it.

Going through the church directory, the deacons and I identified 27 widows and six widowers. Six are remarried, five reside in nursing homes, three are nonresident members and one is a nonmember attender. One person has been widowed twice. We invited those who are part of the active worship life of the congregation to a Saturday appreciation breakfast. Fifteen people responded. Following a delicious meal, I gave a brief meditation.

The first biblical reference to widows appears in Deuteronomy, where the people of Israel are instructed to provide food for those without resources of their own: "At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands" (14:28-29 NIV).

The alien (or stranger), fatherless and widows are people without voice or vote, without power or economic access. And it becomes clear that God has a special place in his heart for these folks.

You often find these three groups of people mentioned together: the alien (or stranger), fatherless and widows. These are people without voice or vote, without power or economic access. And it becomes clear that God has a special place in his heart for these folks. Psalm 68:5 declares, "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling." And Jeremiah 49:11 says, "Leave your orphans; I will protect their lives. Your widows too can trust in me." God emerges in biblical theology as the defender and protector of widows.

Caring for the welfare of widows and others became a litmus test of kings and governing authorities. Once the children of Israel entered the promised land, God instructed them to stay loyal to the ways of the covenant. They dared not treat the marginalized in their new society like the Egyptians had treated them as slaves. If so, God would liberate the oppressed from their midst and treat them as Egyptians.

The prophet Malachi spoke God's word: " 'So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,' says the Lord Almighty" (3:5 NIV).

Matthew 23:14 (NIV) echoes this theme: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Therefore you will be punished more severely."

How God's people treated widows was a matter of faith. Then there's the example of the faithful widow in Luke 21 whose generosity, Jesus said, was an example of wholehearted devotion to God. Or take the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18 who provides a model for perseverance in prayer. Jesus taught that people on the margins of society are often at the center of God's kingdom.

First deacons: It was the plight of widows that led to choosing the first deacons in the early church (Acts 6:1-4).

Perhaps the most extensive treatment of widows in the New Testament is 1 Timothy 5:3-16, which talks about the need for the church to "give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need." James 1:27 says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." In other words, we must factor in the care of widows when assessing our spirituality.

The breakfast hosted by our deacons was one way to communicate our desire to watch

n our midst

Mark Pavlik

Widows and widowers have experienced something most of us avoid thinking about.

out for the widows and widowers in our midst. It was also in appreciation for the peer ministry they give each other and in service to the church. I counted at least 15 ministry areas, including significant leadership roles, that are being served by widows or widowers. Is there a special gift these folks bring to the family of faith? What motivates this group to serve the church to such an extent?

Dangerous memories: Widows and widowers have experienced something most of us avoid thinking about. Losing a spouse is to lose part of oneself. Two significant dates trigger memories for them—when they were married and when their spouse died. Those are often dangerous memories, memories that time never quite heals. But when someone new, like Laura, finds herself in their company, someone like Gerry can say to her, “I know how you feel.” That’s what Tom Sine calls a “gift of brokenness.” That’s the power of groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step groups whose defining center is a common brokenness or struggle.

At the end of our time together, Mary, who is 85 and nearly blind, asked, “Who’s been alone the longest?” Several named the number of years, but it was Edna who carried that distinction. Her husband was killed in a hunting accident in 1969, nearly 30 years ago.

“But we’re not really alone, not really, right?” Mary said.

“That’s right,” everyone said. “Not really.”

Ruth, our senior deacon and a widow herself, promised to do some follow-up with this group. Thanks be to God for the widows and widowers who minister in our midst.

Jim S. Amstutz is pastor of West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

The power of a thank-you note

by Jeanne Knape

A thank-you note is an important part of social etiquette, yet so often the short notes of thanks are forgotten. Many people, including myself, remember to send a quick note to thank someone for a gift given. But should they stop there?

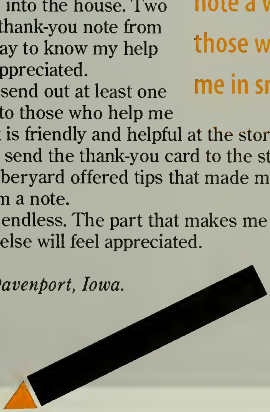
The power of a thank-you note struck me the day I received a pretty decorated card from the elderly woman down the street. On a windy day the week before, she had been having trouble getting her groceries from her car into her house. The wind caught the full plastic bags and whipped them around her legs. I noticed her when I was out on my afternoon walk and assisted her. It only took me a few minutes to help her carry the groceries into the house. Two days later, I received a thank-you note from her. It brightened my day to know my help was truly needed and appreciated.

I send out at least one thank-you note a week to those who help me in small ways.

Now I have a goal. I send out at least one thank-you note a week to those who help me in small ways. If a clerk is friendly and helpful at the store, I look at her or his nametag and send the thank-you card to the store. Once an employee at the lumberyard offered tips that made my carpentry project easier. I sent him a note.

The possibilities are endless. The part that makes me happiest is knowing that someone else will feel appreciated.

Jeanne Knape lives in Davenport, Iowa.



Computer lies

by Joey Earl Horstman

Computers have made part of my life easier. But easier, I need to point out, is not richer, deeper, fuller.

Folks at Graceland College, where I work, say I need a home page. A presence on the Internet will give me clout, they say, virtual heft and girth. "I am with it," a home page says. "I am wired." "I am."

They say people will visit. They'll give me "hits." Students will look upon me with respect. Politicians, ministers, the lowly masses—all will flock to my site.

Start small, they say. Look around at other home pages, see what you like. So I surf, clicking, pointing, watching a little electronic hourglass tell me to wait.

I find Doug out in cyberspace. Doug is a dog who lives in Florida. His favorite color is red. He likes Gaines Burgers, but not the Gaines Burgers that have fake cheese. Doug's owner is Jan. Jan has a boyfriend, Brian, who also has a home page, but no dog. Doug provides me with a link to Brian, but that's about as much surfing as I can stand in one day.

I'm not against computers. Not really. I'm not a Luddite, ready to dump all the technological advances of the last half-century like so many eight-track tapes. I am no Wendell Berry, buried in mail after having the gall not only to admit but to defend not using a computer. I'm sympathetic to Berry, attracted to his argument, supportive of his stand, his nonparticipation. But, alas, I'm no Berry. I write on a computer.

Nor am I against the Internet. Not in principle. Yes, it's filled with pornography and commercials and messages from Doug the dog. Yes, it's a depository of trivia and misinformation, and I'm often tempted to believe that it's all a hoax designed by technicians to make those who are off-line feel left out.

But I've used the Internet several times to check a fact, a date, a score. I've read parts of newspaper articles, checked weather and road conditions. I have low expectations for the Internet, and they have been met.

Computers have made part of my life easier. But easier, I need to point out, is not richer, deeper, fuller.

I bought my home computer in 1987, used. My good friend Jeff says I should be embarrassed by this. I'm behind, missing out on the new and improved, a Gutenbergian relic. I'm like the teacher in the Pringles commercial: While my students are dancing on the playground, I'm stuck in the classroom with greasy chips.

Jeff smiles when I tell him that I don't know how much memory my computer has, though I know approximately what it weighs. He frowns when I tell him it has no hard drive, no modem, no mouse. He nearly cries when I tell him it has two floppy disks.

I feel inadequate around Jeff. He is confident, well adjusted, comfortable using words like RAM and phrases in which you have to say "dot" in the middle. He knows what "html" means, uses "hacker" as a compliment. His computer has speakers. It runs movies. It has solitaire.

My relationship with Jeff has become strained as he's gotten more computer-literate. We're like the two guys in the shampoo commercial—he's the one with the bouncy hair and girlfriend; I'm the one with the flakes and the free weekends.

Invisible waves: I would feel bad about not understanding how a computer works—and not understanding those who understand how a computer works—if I didn't live in a world of other gadgets that I also don't understand. I know more about the rings of Saturn than I do about the things that surround me. I'm baffled by the toaster—not how to use it, but how it works. I don't get how a refrigerator refrigerates, how a washing machine washes, how a muffler muffles. I find it as easy to believe that a band of tiny people inhabits my radio as I do to believe that invisible waves travel through the air, bringing me Bach's Concerto in A Minor. So I'm prepared to not understand.

That's not to say I like it. In fact, my family and I go camping every year to escape our appliances. Of course, I don't understand trees any more than I understand computers. But nature provides mystery rather than confusion, awe instead of self-centeredness. Unlike my gadgets, it doesn't exist for my convenience.

My office at the college was wired a few years ago. Now guys with keys and clipboards periodically swoop down and upgrade me. I'm not sure if they do this because they think I need it or if they're performing some experiment. I suspect there are monkeys somewhere getting the same upgrade and learning faster. They're the control group. By the time I figure out my upgrade, a new one arrives.

I've had email for two years. I get email from people who use no punctuation except to make what I now recognize as smiley faces and frowns. The college wants us to be more computer-literate, so I compose an email to Jerry, an English professor whose office is

These words appeared on the screen: 'Fatal error has occurred.' For a second I thought I had to die.

next to mine. "Hi Jerry," I write. Then I make a smiley face.

I am actually in favor of email. It allows me to keep in touch with a host of folks I would otherwise lose contact with. I emailed my college roommate today. I haven't seen him in a year. I exchanged witticisms with a writer friend, got a baby announcement from my good friend Jeff. I received a note from *The Other Side* magazine saying this essay is late.

I have never been on a chat line and have no immediate plans to join one, but some of my students have. They tell me it's a thrill. Hardly anyone gets abducted, they say, or crosses state lines to meet an electronic lover. That's just on TV. They can be themselves online, they say, which they apparently can't be in their bodies or in their homes or in their churches. It seems we can now feel at home only when we cannot touch.

Last year the power went out in the grocery store. People stopped and looked at each other, wondering how to react. There was a hush, an anxiety, like the Rapture had happened and we'd been left behind. A checkout girl said, "This isn't supposed to happen." A bag boy crashed into the electronic door when it didn't open.

We abandoned our groceries because the scanners didn't work. But even if the store had the old manual cash registers, we couldn't have made our purchases. Clerks can't count change.

Drowning in words: Some say we are getting dumber as a culture. Store clerks can punch buttons or scan bar codes, but they cannot do simple arithmetic. Students can gather data, collect it from their computer screens, but they cannot evaluate it, interpret it, connect it, fashion it into wisdom. We drown in words but have nothing to say.

Computer promoters tell two great lies. The first is this: Accessibility is everything. More information is always better. Anything that's not easily accessed is not worth accessing. I see it in my students sometimes. They're skeptical that anything beyond a heap of immediately available facts is left to know, to experience. They resist any idea or art or worship that demands their concentration. It won't give them anything they cannot get more easily by surfing, they presume. The world, for them, however filled with words and images, is really quite empty.

Which leads to the second great computer lie: Computers will make us better. As soon as every student is on-line, they will all learn better. As soon as every citizens is wired, democracy will be perfected. Lions will lie down with lambs, Arabs and Jews will shake hands, Bill Clinton and Kenneth Starr will hug.

The idea isn't new. Though the technology is bound to our time, the sin is as old as human history. It's the sin we committed in Eden: that we can perfect ourselves, become gods. The computer is a contemporary Tower of Babel, an electronic assault on heaven.

I spent three hours yesterday trying to figure out how to move a paragraph from one essay to another, a simple maneuver the guys with keys can perform in 10 seconds. I could have just printed the paragraph and retyped it, saving my afternoon, but I wanted to know how to do it. "Play around with the computer," I've been told a million times, so I was playing. The wrong game, apparently.

At the height of my frustration, when I seemed to have erased everything, these words appeared on the screen: "Fatal error has occurred." For a second I thought I had to die.

Last winter my good friend Keith gave me a computer. He put it together himself and sent it to me through the real mail as a graduation present. It's a gift more generous than I can thank him for, more generous than I deserve, and I'm more than pleased with it. It has speakers. It has a hard drive, a mouse, a modem, solitaire.

I am impressed with the computer—as I'm often impressed with our technology, the things we humans can do. I'm impressed that Keith could construct it.

But I'm more impressed that he'd do it in the first place and do it for me. It is not the technological marvel that almost brings tears to my eyes, but the human gesture. The new computer may make my life easier. Keith makes it fuller.

It seems we can now feel at home only when we cannot touch.

Joey Earl Horstman teaches at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa, and writes for The Other Side, *from which this article is reprinted. It originally appeared in the July & August, 1998, issue.*

New web site shows third way

Mennonite Board of Missions' Mennonite Media has launched a new way to engage the public on the intersection of Christian faith and current issues.

Mennonite Media's Third Way Cafe web site (located at www.thirdway.com) became fully functional last month. It includes a photo gallery of and quotes by 30 Mennonites from around the world; a section about the Mennonite church, including beliefs and history; a gallery of photos by Howard Zehr of inmates serving life sentences; answers to frequently asked questions about Mennonites; weekly commentaries on political issues and faith; and a weekly column by Mennonite Media staff person Melodie Davis.

The web site's name comes from Anabaptism as a "third way" that is neither Protestant nor Catholic. *—MBM News Service*

MDS stimulates caring in Alabama neighborhood

OAK RIDGE, Ala.—The Oak Ridge Neighborhood Association was formed with the goal of beautifying its neighborhood, located near Birmingham. But since April 8, when a tornado ripped through the area, that goal has taken on more meaning.

Now the association's executive committee meets weekly with Eddie Neufeld, project director of Mennonite Disaster Service's Birmingham project. MDS's presence has motivated local people to care more about their community, say association members.

"The people of the neighborhood are more involved because they see MDS volunteers helping them," says Burnetta Hunter, a member of the association's executive board. "Seeing people help you makes you want to help yourself."

Says Neufeld: "It has really been a pleasure working with the Oak Ridge group. They are very committed to the community."

MDS has already worked on 36 houses and plans to remain in Oak Ridge until March 1999.*—MCC News Service*

MWC efforts take root in Indiana

STRASBOURG, France—The Mennonite World Conference executive committee has left its legacy in Goshen, Ind. During their July 20-25 meeting on the Goshen College campus, committee members planted a flowering crab apple tree in front of College Mennonite Church.

The committee intends to plant a tree during each meeting, which is held annually in a different location around the world.

The inspiration for the ceremony came from two sources: Tanzanian Mennonites, who are engaged in a massive tree-planting project as a conservation effort and to raise money for the church, and the World Council of Churches, which proposes tree-planting as an act of faith and renewal of the earth. *—MWC News Service*

Sudan workers lying low after U.S. attack

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) two workers in Khartoum, Sudan, are staying close to home in the wake of the United States' attack on the city on Aug. 20. But no problems have been reported.

"Since its beginning, MCC has worked in tense situations," says overseas program director Ray Brubacher. "MCC workers' best protection is their reliance on local churches and partners for advice on the situation."

In an Aug. 20 email message to MCC headquarters in Akron, Bev and Rick Binder and their sons, Simon and Levi, reported hearing "what sounded like two jets or missiles fly over," followed by the sound of thunder in the distance. But the Binders did not know what had happened until they watched CNN later. *—MCC News Service*

Former Africa missionary dies at 91

NEWTON, Kan.—Russell Schnell, who served in the Congo/Zaire from 1932 to 1964 under the Commission on Overseas Mission and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, died July 30 in Phoenix. He was 91.

During his 32 years in Africa, Schnell worked as a printer, school administrator, secondary school teacher and teacher trainer, bookstore and office manager and evangelist.

After returning to the United States, Schnell served pastorates at Trenton (Ohio) Mennonite Church and Orange Lake Village Interdenominational Church in Largo, Fla., before retiring to Phoenix, where he lived with Helen, his wife.*—GCMC News Service*

MCC Canada worker prepares for land trial

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Central Committee volunteer Reg Good last year discovered an important document for a Native Canadian land suit. Now he, and the Saugeen Ojibway for whom he works, wait for the trial.

The tribe has been trying for the last 30 years to reclaim lands in Ontario they were forced to surrender in 1854. Good, of Kitchener, Ont., has been serving part-time as a researcher for the Saugeen Ojibway since 1996.

Last year in England he found the Royal Proclamation of 1763, committing the British Crown, which ruled what is now Canada, to act in the best interest of aboriginal people, particularly protecting their lands. The Saugeen Ojibway maintain the Crown failed to act in the tribe's best interests when it was forced to give up its land.

"As far as we know, there are no copies [of the Royal Proclamation] in Canada," Good says. "It embodies a lot of the rights that Native people claim they're entitled to."

Meanwhile, Good continues his research for the Saugeen Ojibway as they wait for their court date. "We don't expect to get to trial before the year 2000," he says.*—MCC Canada News Service*

Events

Peacemaker Congress IV, Sept. 24-27, North Manchester, Ind. Sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams and New Call to Peacemaking. Contact: CPT, 312-455-1199.
"Engendering the Past: Women and Men in Mennonite History" conference, Oct. 16-17, Winnipeg. Contact: jediger1@callisto.uwinnipeg.ca or 204-339-0959.
Eastern Mennonite Missions Fall Evangelism Seminar, Oct. 31, Lancaster, Pa. Speaker: Stan Toler. Contact: 717-898-2251 or danielk@emm.org.

Workers

Peak, Michael, was ordained May 31 as pastor of First Mennonite Church, Paso Robles, Calif.
Vang, Neng Chue, was ordained June 7 as pastor of Hmong Community Church-Mennonite, Fresno, Calif.

Births

Budzik, Justin Daniel, July 27, to George and Krista (Neff) Budzik, Parkesburg, Pa.
Engle, Austin Michael, Aug. 15, to Marcy (Zehr) and Michael Engle, Harrisonburg, Va.
Frampton, Brady Stephen, Aug. 5, to Kristen and Rich Frampton, Oxford, Pa.
Graber, Natalie Brenneman, Aug. 13, to Ruth Ann Brenneman and Galen Graber, Goshen, Ind.
Kelley, Michael Robert, Aug. 10, to Jim and Stacey (Bachert) Kelley, Kouts, Ind.
Leatherman, Amanda Hope Gerber, Aug. 7, to Evangeline (Gerber) and Gerry Leatherman, Hillsboro, Ore.
Miller, Sarah Marie, Aug. 11, to Brenda (Stoltzfus) and Frank Miller, Oxford, Iowa.
Morano, Samantha Jean, Aug. 5, to Kathryn (Siftar) and Leo Morano, Harleysville, Pa.
Petzoldt, Zara Kaye, Aug. 3, to Cindy (Miller) and Curt Petzoldt, Sarasota, Fla.
Rhodes, Addison David, Aug. 5, to Donita (Schwartzentruber) and Steven Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va.
Rohrer, Brock Dagan, July 27, to Cindy (Kreider) and Gerald Rohrer, Cochranville, Pa.
Rush, Luke Miller, Aug. 12, to Karen (Miller) and Phil Rush, Harrisonburg, Va.
Schmeider, Jacob Douglas, July 17, to Candi (Wagler) and Doug Schmeider, Marengo, Iowa.
Schroeder, Jackson Robert, Aug. 1, to Kristine Fletcher and Rick Schroeder, Manhattan, Kan.
Schultz, Lauren Olivia, July 7, to Cindy (Taylor) and Tracy Schultz, Columbiana, Ohio.
Shetler, Myka Fern, Aug. 9, to Jennifer (Harrington) and Willard Shetler, Goshen, Ind.
Swartzendruber, Curtis Scott, Aug. 8, to Rodney and Vicki (Kauffman) Swartzendruber, Bay Port, Mich.
Weaver, Wesley Scott, July 18, to Tim and Wendy (Moyer) Weaver, New Holland, Pa.

Marriages

Adams/Fisher: Jamie Adams, Bristol, Ind., and Matthew Fisher, Rochester, Ind., July 18, by Terry Diener.
Adams/Yoder: Jeffrey Adams, Johnstown, Pa., and Sandra Yoder, Hollsopple, Pa., June 20, by Wayne Lasure.
Burkholder/Janzen: Brian Burkholder, Tofield, Alta., and Rachael Janzen, Harleysville, Pa., Aug. 8, by James Longacre.
Comardelle/Davis: Andreah Comardelle, Kiln, Miss., and Donald Davis, Poplarville, Miss., Aug. 8, by David Kniss.
Crowder/Mast: Brian Crowder, Sarasota, Fla., and Janell Mast, Sarasota, June 27, by Duane Yoder.
Eberly/Wenger: Sandy Eberly, Goshen, Ind., and John Wenger, Altoona, Pa., May 30, by Nancy Kauffmann.
Gruber/Wenrich: Anita Gruber, Lititz, Pa., and Jonathan Wenrich, Leola, Pa., Aug. 8, by Eugene Harting.
Fryberger/Knutsen: Matt Fryberger, Tempe, Ariz., and Melody Knutzen, Prescot, Ariz., Aug. 1, by Eunice Pearson and John Lawrence.
Geers/Jantz: Jennifer Geers, Evergreen, Colo., and Rodney Jantz, Inola, Okla., Aug. 15, by Len Billings.
Hiebner/Jensen: Steve Hiebner, Henderson, Neb., and Christi Jensen, Dannebrog, Neb., Aug. 8, by Eldon Elsberry.
Hochstetlar/Miller: Jay Hochstetlar, Goshen, Ind., and Lori Miller, Goshen, June 27, by Nancy Kauffmann.
King/Weaver: Leslie King, Valparaiso, Ind., and Michael Weaver, Crown Point, Ind., Aug. 8, by Chris Birky.
Martin/Reinhardt: Bill Martin, Bristol, Ind., and Karen Reinhardt, Wakarusa, Ind., Aug. 1, by Wesley Bontreger.
Miles/Miller: Chris Miles, and Nancy Miller, Fayette, Ohio, Aug. 8, by Allen Rutter.
Moscript/Yoder: Gary Moscript, Hesston, Kan., and Rachel Yoder, Hesston, Aug. 8, by Scott Miller.
Schmidt/Unruh: Lynn Schmidt, Waterloo, Ont., and Trevor Unruh, Waterloo, Aug. 1, by Rudy Baergen.
Slater/Yoder: Keith Slater, Santa Barbara, Calif., and Kate Yoder, Parnell, Iowa, July 25, by David Boshart.

Deaths

Birky, Elsie Troyer, 83, Kouts, Ind., died Aug. 7. Survivors: children Joan Johnson, Leslie, Wesley, Kathy Bailey; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 11 at Kouts by John Murray and Bill Beck.

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Birky, Orvill, 83, Kouts, Ind., died Aug. 9. Survivors: children Joan Johnson, Leslie, Wesley, Kathy Bailey; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 11 at Kouts by John Murray and Bill Beck.

Dahlin, Evelyn Saeger, 84, Enid, Okla., died Aug. 4. Survivors: daughter, Shirley Wentworth; one grandchild; one great-grandchild. Burial: Aug. 8 at Enid by Norman Unruh.

Ebersole, Savilla, 90, Elkhart, Ind., died July 30. Burial: Aug. 1 at Greentown, Ind., by Andrew Kreider.

Schnell, Russell, 91, Glendale, Ariz., died July 30. Survivors: wife, Helen; children Carolyn Yost, Marilyn Memmer, Evelyn Moler, Tamar Myers; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 3 at Phoenix by Ray Keim.

Slagell, Kathryn, 83, Ithaca, Mich., died Aug. 9 of heart failure. Survivors: children Joan Crites, Glenn, Frank, Lee; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 12 at Ashley, Mich., by Joe Pendleton.

Smith, Louella, 89, Goshen, Ind., died July 22. Survivors: husband, Tilman; children Carolyn Diener, Marian Yoder, Eleanor, John, Stanley; 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Burial: July 25 at Goshen by Firman Gingerich and Nancy Kauffmann.

Snider, Bretton, 71, St. Jacobs, Ont., died July 27 of lung cancer. Survivors: wife, Luella; children Keith, Ken, Gary, Rick, Bonnie Naherniak; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Cremated.

Snyder, Lovina Ziegler, 79, Waterloo, Ont., died July 23 of a stroke. Survivors: husband, Wayne; children Donald, Marilyn, Richard, June Gingrich; four grandchildren. Burial: July 25 at St. Jacobs, Ont., by Anna Hemmendinger and Barb Smith-Morrison.

Stauffer, Kerry Ryan, 25, Milford, Neb., died July 29. Survivors: parents, Sharon and William Stauffer Jr. Burial: July 31 at Milford, Neb., by Anthony Troyer, Lloyd Gingerich and William Saltzman.

Summers, Edna, 97, Goshen, Ind., died July 5. Survivors: Kathryn Sherer, Robert; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: July 9 at Goshen by Clare Schumm and Firman Gingerich.

Thiessen, Lois, 56, Winnipeg, died July 13 of chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Survivors: husband, Arnold; children Bruce, Andrew, Melanie. Burial: July 17 at Aberdeen, Sask., by Ardith Frey.

Waidelich, Leon, 61, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 3 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Wynemia; children Rhonda, Denise, Beth Holsopple, Rachel Horning; three grandchildren; parents, Otis and Caroline Waidelich. Burial: Aug. 7 at Pettisville, Ohio, by John Horning, Lester Roth and Charles Gautsche.

Yoder, Caroly Slaubaugh, 67, Wellman, Iowa, died July 31 of cancer. Survivors: husband, Lester; stepchildren Carroll, Marcus, Wilbur, Milford, Galen; 16 step-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 4 at Parnell, Iowa, by David Boshart.

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Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, Pa., is seeking an experienced ***director of children's ministry*** for its 300+ children. Full-time position requires a high-energy person who loves children, has experience in leading multiple staff, and possesses both creative and administrative skills. Petra is a charismatic Mennonite church with a regular worship attendance of 700+.

Send resume to Petra Christian Fellowship, 565 Airport Road, New Holland, PA 17557; fax 717-354-8584; email petra@redrose.net.

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Contact: Search Committee, c/o Peter Hildebrand, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; 204-324-8317; email aaront@mb.sympatico.ca.

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking a ***Mennonite Foundation representative*** for the Lancaster, Pa., area and also the Harleysville, Pa., region. The Foundation provides planned giving support to an established donor constituency and charitable institutions. Qualifications for the positions include the ability to understand and communicate financial and estate planning concepts, good presentation skills, willingness to obtain securities licensure and earn CFP or other professional designations, and a willingness to travel 25 to 30 percent. MMA offers a competitive salary and excellent benefits.

Send or fax letter of interest along with resume to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Dept., P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; fax 219-533-5264.

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To commemorate our new office facility in Lancaster, special products and promotions are planned for the month of September. Call the credit union for more details!

Together we're making a difference!

by Gordon Houser

On Aug. 13 our family went to Worlds of Fun, an amusement park in Kansas City, Mo. We let our son and daughter each invite a friend. The six of us joined thousands of people at this park, a fraction of the millions that pour into such places every summer in the United States and around the globe.

What attracts so many to these monstrous machines that fling us through the air or spin us around or get us wet? Safe thrills. Young people especially, I've noticed, seem to be attracted to risky activities. And at these parks you can experience what it is like to fall from a great height or travel at great speed upside down without great risk of getting hurt.

This is not a bad thing. It's better than getting drunk and playing chicken on the highway or experimenting with drugs or guns. But it's not very meaningful. Like much in our culture, it's utterly self-gratifying. At the same time, it's something that's more fun to experience with others, with friends or members of your family. You don't see many people by themselves at these places.

If people want to experience danger or risk, though, why not sign up with Christian Peacemaker Teams or take on parenthood (or work for a religious magazine)? These mean more than mere self-gratification.

What do you find at these parks? Are they indeed amusing? At Worlds of Fun you find a veneer of different cultures, with sections devoted to Africa, Scandinavia, the Orient, the Old West. But these are so superficial, so laden with stereotype that you want to gag. (I know, I shouldn't expect a thorough anthropological presentation.)

You are surrounded by noise. You can't escape it. If you stand too close to certain rides, you can hardly hear the person next to you because of the music that blares continually. Outside one arcade I encountered a glimpse of hell: loudspeakers playing the same four nostalgic TV theme songs ("Green Acres," "Rawhide," "The Beverley Hillbillies" and "Bonanza") over and over, ad nauseum.

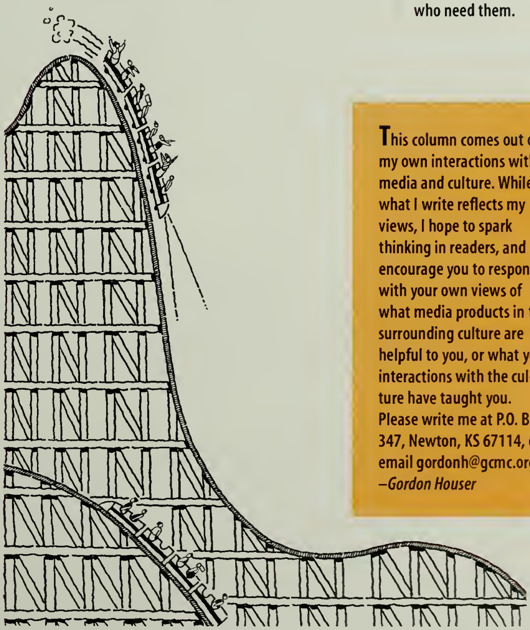
The rides themselves are an adventure. I avoided some in order to protect my vulnerable neck and queasy stomach, but my kids loved them. Since these are the main attractions here, you don't see many elderly people—grandparents. And the majority of the rides require the rider to be at least four feet tall, so you don't see a lot of young children. You see lots of teenagers and young adults.

One ride none of us tried was The Ripcord, which cost $25 if you go alone, $20 each if two of you go at once, and $15 each if three go together. The sack they tie you in holds no more than three. Once you're securely fastened, a pulley hauls you up about 150 feet, from which you drop, then swing from a rope for a couple of minutes.

Many of the rides involve what my brothers encountered in the Army: Hurry up and wait. The ride with one of the longest lines is also one of the shortest in duration. Called The Detonator, it carries 24 riders at a time (each securely fastened in a seat on the outside of the ride's twin towers) straight up in the air about 150 feet in about one second. (That's 3.5 Gs of force, according to one source.) Then it drops you part way down. It's a unique experience.

What is my conclusion? Amusement parks attract many people, cost a lot (entry to Worlds of Fun costs $27, but you can get coupons for much less; a person we met in line said that another park, Six Flags, costs $36) and offer a superficial view of the world, expensive food and vicarious thrills.

But The Detonator is awesome.



art

Weathering the Storm: Stories of Perseverance is a mixed-media collage and scratchboard drawing exhibit by Lora Jost, a Mennonite artist whose work has appeared in *The Mennonite* (see the April 7 cover). The exhibit runs Aug. 10-Sept. 2 at the Lawrence (Kan.) Art Center Gallery. Lora invited those who visited the exhibit to "bring along an object or article of clothing that might help someone weather a real storm," she wrote in a publicity flyer. The clothing and objects were to be incorporated into the exhibit and later donated to people in Lawrence who need them.

This column comes out of my own interactions with media and culture. While what I write reflects my views, I hope to spark thinking in readers, and I encourage you to respond with your own views of what media products in the surrounding culture are helpful to you, or what your interactions with the culture have taught you. Please write me at P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, or email gordonh@gcmc.org.
–Gordon Houser

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Rich Preheim

Identity, complacency and making headlines in this world

For Christians cannot be distinguished from the human race by country or language or customs … in clothing and food and other matters of daily living.—The Epistle to Diognetus

It may be difficult to convince Moses Smucker of this, but the response of mainstream culture, particularly the media, to the recent drug-related arrests among the Amish of Lancaster County, Pa., is a compliment.

You have probably already heard the story: Two men in their 20s and one juvenile, all from Old Order Amish homes but none members of the church, were arrested July 2 and charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine and methamphetamine. They allegedly bought the drugs from a motorcycle gang and sold them to other Amish young people at weekend parties.

You have also probably already seen and heard popular America's reaction: The incident was covered by media as disparate as Religion News Service and *The New Yorker.* Reports were transmitted over the airwaves and on the Internet. David Letterman even whipped up a Top Ten list of "signs your Amish son is in trouble."

Not only does society grant us religious anonymity because of our acculturation, we readily accept it.

All of which prompted Smucker, an Amish businessman in Churchtown, Pa., to wonder in an interview in *The New Yorker:* "Who in the press would write a headline like 'Three Methodists Take Drugs' or 'Three Jewish Boys Take Drugs.' It's out of proportion."

Smucker is right—to an extent. Rarely reported is the religious affiliation of anybody else involved in something sordid or shady. But nobody else is the Amish. For much of the "English" (non-Amish) world, these stereotypical simple folks uphold a higher standard, an appealing purity of life. And there is the rub: For a group which embodies such striking separation from the world to have members of its community be caught in something so worldly—not to mention destructive and illegal—is, well, newsworthy. The distribution and use of cocaine among people who don't have electricity in their houses or belts on their pants is difficult to ignore.

Meanwhile, when was the last time you read a headline shouting "General Conference Mennonite Sentenced for Assault" or "Mennonite Church Member Charged With Tax Evasion"? We are not immune to such incidents; they just haven't been reported as such—if they are reported at all.

This is not to romanticize the Amish. They also suffer from evils such as alcoholism and domestic violence. Even drugs first reportedly surfaced in Amish circles 25 years ago or more. The Amish are human, after all, and have human failings. But for the media to report that three members of the Amish community were arrested for dealing drugs is also to imply that tens of thousands of Amish don't do that.

By their lifestyle and reputation based on the practice of their religious convictions, the Amish are held accountable by society at large. But their "English" cousins in the Anabaptist family can hide in business suits, behind the wheels of sport-utility vehicles, inside ranch-style homes, in front of TVs. Despite any proclamations of simplicity, noncomformity and discipleship, we, unlike the Amish, are often indistinguishable from the rest of society.

Not only does society grant us religious anonymity because of our acculturation, we readily accept it. By societal standards, it is acceptable to engage in unrestrained materialism and consumerism, conduct questionable business practices, pursue any pleasurable activity, feed our addictions. It isn't just that we are told to do certain things; we are allowed to do them even if we know better. And we can do so without betraying our church identity.

To be sure, our conduct should not be dictated simply by who is watching. And there are some benefits to participating in mainstream society. But we also need to recognize the latitude granted us by society and how that can lull us into laziness and complacency in our religious practice. We need to be vigilant that everything we do witnesses to the God who calls us to be in but not of this world, no matter who sees it or knows about it.—*rp*

the Mennonite
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Advocacy to government: Is it OK?

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Love, sin and self-righteousness

Little seems to be written about the biblical mandate to love others. Whether we consider homosexuals as friends, neighbors, brothers, sisters or enemies, the command in the Bible is clear. So how about some discussion and action on trying to practice this as Jesus did? It is easy to self-righteously distance ourselves from sinners and condemn others who get involved, but what does God really call us to do? Jesus said to the Pharisees, "It is the sick who need a physician."

The Christians I have known that have struggled with homosexuality desperately needed fellowship. They spent most of their lives battling loneliness and feelings of self-destruction. Who is in more need of the body of Christ? As we require celibacy of homosexuals, are we willing to walk with them on this journey, to help carry their burdens, to struggle with them, to hear their stories, to offer encouragement in the tough times? Are we willing to set aside our own sin of self-righteousness and spend the time and energy it takes to love the "sinners"? Are we willing to risk our reputations to follow Jesus? Before we talk of more exclusion, let's first take the logs out of our own eyes and love as Jesus did. *—Irene S. Morrow, Warden, Wash.*

In response to Charles Shenk's letter (Readers Say, July 28), the only reasonable reaction of the church to sin should be to call for repentance. It matters not which sin it may be. For the church to do less is to leave people without hope. It is not being self-righteous for us to call sin what God has already judged as sin. After Jesus told the woman caught in adultery that he did not condemn her, he said, "Go now and leave your life of sin."

An "I'm OK, you're OK" attitude toward any sin is an idea rejected in the 1980s and in the Bible long ago. Sin is not OK! We know of no church that says greed is good, that God made us with greedy tendencies and it is no sin. We know of no church that says adultery is good, that God made us with adulterous tendencies and it is no sin. The same is true of other sins. So why are there churches that are trying to say that the sin of homosexual activity is no sin? Or why do we Mennonites even debate it? All we are doing is following society instead of God's Word. We dare not accommodate sin. Isaiah says, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil."*—Thursday Night Care Group, Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church*

Law vs. grace

I was disappointed in the limited choices that the Aug. 18 editorial seemed to offer. To reduce our conflicts over sexuality and other moral issues to a choice between law and grace hardly seems fair. It contributes to the unclear thinking that is often driven by an emotional agenda: To include is an expression of grace, to make a boundary is to choose law.

Most of us are not comfortable with anything that is perceived to exclude, myself included. But we also need to realize that it is impossible to define an identity without talking about exclusions. The work of carving out our identity should not be reduced to a choice between law and grace. I suspect that much of our focus on "establishing borders" is not a symptom of a denomination choosing between law and grace. For many Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church people, it is about trying desperately hard to find their way through the murk of establishing a clear identity for a new denomination as a witness to our contemporary context. That is bound to bring us to the point of necessary crisis.

While the fundamental question of our time might be the use of coercive power, it is not the only agenda that should shape our identity and witness. You may be hearing less about peace, justice and reconciliation in our church today. That may be due to those things which are chosen to fill the pages of our publications rather than that which we are working at in our congregations and conferences. I categorically reject the accusation that we are more interested in defining law and grace than working day by day, hour by hour at a Christocentric vision for reconciliation and peacemaking. Our vision, after all, is to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace.*—David Boshart, Parnell, Iowa*

Structure is of secondary importance

Robert Hartzler's "Forget the Ecclesiastical Examiners" (July 14) is thought provoking. As one whose roots run deeply into Amish and Amish Mennonite background, I find his mention of the Amish commitment to congregational structure especially interesting. It is true that there is no central body to which local congregations must give account. But it is likewise true that to move beyond the boundaries of acceptable lifestyle is to forfeit congregational membership in the larger body.

As a Beachy Amish minister, it occurs to me that it seems to be our tendency to be concerned

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s say readers say

about structure at the expense of weightier matters. Could it be that the person in a church with an individualistic spirit and the congregation which is unwilling to abide by accepted guidelines are motivated by the same spirit?

To me, to be congregational or conference in structure is of secondary importance. When our structure does not leave us free to address vital issues, our integrity is at stake. In the final analysis, "correct" structure can never take the place of a faithful and honest response to God and his Word.—*David L. Miller, Partridge, Kan.*

Discipline and disagreements

The July 14 editorial, "Diversity Is a Gift from God," is somewhat atypical in that J. Lorne Peachey usually does an exceptionally good job of sharing biblical truths. In this editorial, he uses Bible verses out of context and then suggests that Christian love can be equated with society's idea of tolerance. The kind of love taught by Christ and his apostles and their expectations for the church called for compassionate mutual discipline among members of God's family.

A good way to help us handle our disagreements (Editorial, Aug. 4) and to respect both congregational and conference responsibility has already been used: our new confession of faith and the churchwide studies of proposed documents on topics such as Scripture, the Holy Spirit and human sexuality. They need to be used more extensively.—*Ivan R. Unger, Cambridge, Ont.*

Trustworthy standard

I have never found an error in the Bible. I do not fully understand everything in it. Does anyone? God is God, and the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life are infallible.—*Ron Raush, Columbia, Pa.*

Cover photo
by Paul M. Schrock

CPT partnership brings Hebron home demolition disturbingly close to New York family's home

When you link with a family, it gives a face to all of this.

—*Susan Klassen*

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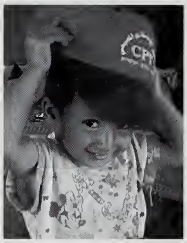


Dalia, the 3-year-old daughter of Atta and Rodeina Jabber of Hebron in the West Bank, dons a Christian Peacemaker Teams cap. The Jabbers' home was demolished Aug. 19 by Israeli authorities. The Jabbers were the first to be matched with a U.S. family through CPT's Campaign for Secure Dwellings.

CHICAGO—After Atta and Rodeina Jabber's son, Rajeh, was born in April, the Susan and Victor Klassen family of Webster, N.Y., sent a blue sleeper for the baby. It may now lie with many of the Jabbers' other possessions beneath the rubble of what once was the Palestinian family's home on the outskirts of Hebron, West Bank. The Israeli military demolished the home on Aug. 19 as part of ongoing efforts to make room for Israeli settlement expansion.

The Jabbers and the Klassens were the first families matched by Christian Peacemaker Teams' Campaign for Secure Dwellings. The campaign links a Palestinian family with a North American group, which supports and advocates for them.

"When you link with a family, it gives a face to all of this," Susan Klassen says. "You wonder where they are gong to sleep tonight, how they will cope with their new baby, where they will get the money to rebuild, how their crops are."

The Klassens and their children—Nathan, 11, and Sylvia, 7—are the primary contacts with the Jabbers, supported by Rochester (N.Y.) Area Mennonite Fellowship. The congregation has prayed for the Jabbers' safety every Sunday for the past year. The Klassens write regularly to U.S. government officials and send photos and letters to the Jabber family, which also includes daughters Amoni, 5, and Dalia, 3.

The Campaign for Secure Dwellings has matched about 40 Palestinian families facing home demolition with families and congregations in the United States and Canada. Another 10 Palestinian families are on a waiting list. North American campaign participants have advocated for their Palestinian partners by writing letters to local newspapers, contacting federal legislators, making presentations to church and civic groups and visiting Israeli consulates in the United States and Canada.

"We are noticing a change in the kinds of responses [participants] are getting from legislators," says campaign coordinator Rich Meyer. "Six months ago we got, 'Thank you for your concern. I'll look into it.' Now we are getting, 'We have told the Israeli government that we consider their home-demolition policy to be an obstacle to peace, and we have asked them to stop these provocative actions.' That change shows that they are hearing our concern and starting to recognize the problem."

The Jabber family has deeds to their land dating back to the Ottoman Empire. The Israeli military has threatened to demolish their house for years and recently confiscated vineyards, orchards and fields and has shut off water. Rodeina Jabber and Atta's mother were injured as they tried to resist the Aug. 19 demolition. They were treated at a local hospital.

Earlier this summer, the al Atrash family's home near Hebron was destroyed. The family is matched with Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church.—*Kathy Kern of CPT News Service*

Frank Epp memorial trees remain

HEBRON, West Bank—The memory of Frank Epp, or at least part of it, is alive and well in the West Bank, his wife discovered last month.

Epp, a Canadian Mennonite pastor, educator and journalist, was a staunch supporter of the Palestinians in the Holy Land. When he died in 1986 at age 56, the Arab Federation of Canada donated 4,000 olive trees, which were planted in his memory near Hebron.

As a member of a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Hebron in August, Epp's wife, Helen, discovered that although many of the trees have been destroyed, others were thriving. She visited the field of Musa Khalil, one of the Palestinian farmers who had received some of the trees. His land has since been confiscated by Israeli authorities, and about half the trees have been chopped down by the army and Israeli settlers or eaten by wild animals.

"[The translator] apologized profusely to me and seemed embarrassed that not all the trees had survived," says Epp, who lives in Waterloo, Ont. "I, on the other hand, conveyed my sadness to them. It was not my loss but Musa's."

Frank Epp was the founding editor of *Mennonite Reporter* and president of Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont., and served on the Mennonite World Conference presidium.

Siberian Mennonite ministry wants to reach across denominational divides

NEWTON, Kan.—Willi and Andrei Peters' path is taking a new direction.

For the past 18 months, Willi, pastor of a Mennonite congregation in Novosibirsk, Siberia, and Andrei, his son, have been publishing *Path of Salvation*, a newsletter for Mennonites in the former Soviet Union and abroad, featuring theological perspectives and information about other Mennonites. But now the Peterses are expanding their vision to report on other Christian groups.

"They feel a publication that reaches across the denominational divides in the former Soviet Union is needed to foster unity and mission by Christians in their country," says Peter Rempel, secretary for Europe and the former Soviet Union for the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM), who recently visited congregations in Siberia.

COM has budgeted $4,000 for the production of *Path of Salvation* in 1998. Rempel during his trip delivered a used laptop computer for the publication.

Andrei Peters is the editor, main writer and manager of *Path of Salvation*. "He seems to be thriving in this role," Rempel says. Willi is an adviser, and his daughter Anna prepares the children's page and is a production assistant.

Path of Salvation is distributed free. Five hundred copies were printed of the latest issue, but 800 will be needed to meet the demand for the next one. While the Peterses have received significant expressions of support for their work, that has not translated into financial support from other denominations and missions. "The leaders of some groups have reservations about cooperating with a paper that includes reports from other Christian groups with different theological and ethical norms," Rempel says.

If *Path of Salvation* cannot generate enough support from the other groups, it will return to a Mennonite focus.—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

GCMC photo by Peter Rempel

Andrei Peters speaks to a Mennonite group worshiping in a Baptist church in Tomsk, Siberia. Peters, his father and his sister produce *Path of Salvation*, a newsletter originally for Mennonites. But now they want to make the publication interdenominational.

Siberian Mennonite groups struggle in post-Soviet era

A century after Mennonites first settled in Siberia and decades after thousands were exiled there during the heights of Soviet repression, the various churches in the region with Mennonite connections fall into four groups.

"A few congregations or groups are rooted in the mainstream of Mennonites in Russia, the 'kirchliche' or 'churchly' Mennonites," says Peter Rempel, secretary for Europe and the former Soviet Union for the Commission on Overseas Mission.

The kirchliche Mennonites came to Siberia from the major settlements in the Ukraine around the turn of the century. Rempel says they took a less confrontational stance during the Soviet era and retained the Mennonite name. Membership has been depleted by emigration.

Rempel says there appears to be only one Mennonite congregation in Russia that calls itself Mennonite Brethren. Located in the Siberian city of Solzovka, the congregation is a union of MB and Mennonite groups, he says.

The other MB churches have formed Brotherhoods of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches. They refused to register with the Soviet government and suffered harassment and imprisonment of its leaders under the Soviets. "By now the sense of Mennonite identity seems faint," Rempel says.

The fourth group of Mennonites is part of what is sometimes called Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches (not to be confused with the MB-related Brotherhood). Rempel says the group includes "significant numbers of members of Mennonite origin."

"The [group] was the conduit for official linkages for Mennonite organizations to churches in the U.S.S.R.," Rempel says, "and also made informal contacts to unorganized Mennonite churches possible."—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

Ukraine building to again be church

A former Mennonite church building in the Ukrainian town of Kutuzovka will once again become a place for worship, maybe even for Mennonites.

The brick Petershagen church, a landmark for Mennonite tourists, is being released by civic authorities. Frank Dyck, a Canadian pastoring a Mennonite congregation in Zaporozhye, has led efforts to expedite the process. As a result, he has started meeting with a group of about 100 people in Kutuzovka. It is unclear what denominational affiliation the emerging congregation will seek. One resident of ethnic Mennonite descent remains in Kutuzovka.

The church building was erected in 1892. It was confiscated by the government about 70 years ago and has been used as a granary and machine shed.—*Canadian Mennonite*

Helping, succeeding by workplace rules

Job program doesn't do business like other agencies

WINNIPEG—What if agencies that want to help the poor played by the same rules as business? What if they could only get paid after selling a service?

In 1996, Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, Mennonite-affiliated Eden Mental Health Services and the Winnipeg chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates decided to find out. In partnership with the Manitoba government, they launched a two-year pilot project called Opportunities for Employment to help Winnipeggers on social assistance find long-term work. The government would pay OFE a stipend for each placement only after participants had been at a job for six months. No up-front grants, no money for good intentions.

Two years later, the answer is in. "It works," says OFE general manager Ted Klassen. "You can help poor people by playing by the rules of the marketplace."

Seventy percent of people who have found jobs through OFE were still working six months later. More than 600 people have been placed in long-term jobs during the past two years. Further proof of success came in May when the Manitoba government signed a new five-year agreement with OFE. "We passed the test," Klassen says.

Do your part: OFE's overriding message is simple, he says: "You are responsible for you. We're partners in this thing; we'll do our part, you do yours."

Participants are required to attend three one-day orientation sessions over a two- to three-week period. "We could do it all in one week, but we want to test their commitment to stick with something over a longer period," Klassen says. Also, participants have to be on time—come late or miss a class and they are asked to leave the course. No exceptions, no excuses.

Is this too tough? After all, many of the people coming to OFE have sad stories of difficult lives: drunken parents, broken families, abuse, poverty. "It's not that we're trying to be hardhearted," Klassen says. "Some of the stories make me want to cry. But out there in the work world there are rules to live by and expectations to meet. You have to be on time. You have to put in a full day's work."

He acknowledges that not everyone will agree with the OFE approach. Some might question placing expectations on poor people before giving them assistance, citing the Bible's directive to give to all in need. But Klassen sees it differently.

"If our help is going to make an impact, people first have to want to help themselves," he says. "It wouldn't be helpful to thrust them into the work world with the expectation that things will be handed to them on a silver platter. Life doesn't work that way."

Plus, sending unmotivated and undisciplined people out to employers would be bad for OFE. "The government only pays us if they stay at their jobs for six months," Klassen says. "We can't afford to invest time and energy in people, only to have them quit after a week or get fired."

> **We can't afford to invest time and energy in people, only to have them quit after a week or get fired.**
>
> —*Ted Klassen*

Sending right people: OFE found that most of the first group of people they sent to All-Fab, a building components factory, left after a week or two. The job sounded great—indoor work making prefabricated roof and floor trusses—but the work was hard. Now OFE takes candidates on a tour of the plant before they decide if they want to work there. That has reduced the number of people who quit.

"OFE sends us the right people," says All-Fab operations manager Garry Roehr. "They understand what we need. They do a better job of prescreening people than other job service agencies we have tried."

Says James Penman, who spent five months on social assistance before getting a job at All-Fab through OFE, "It wasn't like other places that try to help you find a job."

Most of the people who sign up with OFE are ready to get off social assistance. After her employer downsized, Sandy Coad found going on welfare to be the hardest thing she ever had to do. What made her job search more difficult was lack of transferable computer skills.

"Life lost its meaning," says the single mother of two. "It was hard to keep my self-respect."

Through OFE she was able to upgrade her computer skills and receive other job-related training. Today she works as an office administrator at a janitorial service company. "It's good to come home from work and feel tired after a busy day," she says.

For Klassen, Coad represents what OFE is all about. "She succeeded, so we succeeded," he says. "Ultimately, we all win when people get off social assistance and become productive, contributing citizens."—*John Longhurst of MEDA News Service*

Ohio congregation reunites youth choir

Jesus said unless believers become like children, they won't enter heaven. Martin's Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio, took a musical step in that direction last month.

Nearly 50 of the 125 members of the congregation's former youth choir—some of them now grandparents—participated in a reunion concert Aug. 2. The event celebrated the 50th anniversary of the choir's first choir. The choir was discontinued in the 1960s.

"It used to be when I gave the signal, everyone rose together," said George Falb, the former director who led the concert. "Now I have to wait a little."

The concert included a German chorale, American spirituals and a French carol.
—*Celia Lehman*

MCC assignment was upper crust

AKRON, Pa.—After two years of studying social sciences, college life bored Sharon Entz. The 22-year-old from Newton, Kan., wanted more. She wanted a new recipe for her life.

So she went to Mexico with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and baked bread.

"I was at a standstill in school," Entz says. "I wanted to learn more about the world. ... I found this amazing placement in Mexico. A perfect placement working with women."

She joined Serving and Learning Together (SALT), a one-year MCC program for young adults to live and work in overseas assignments. Her assignment was with a health promotion organization in the state of Tlaxa in central Mexico. "Basically, I followed around Alesia Sanches, a promoter, and plugged in anywhere I could," Entz says.

She learned as much as she could about medicinal plant uses. And she learned that her family pastime of baking endeared her to the women she worked with. Entz showed them how to bake bread, cookies and pies. "These women didn't know how to make whole wheat bread," she says. "They grow a lot of grain in Tlaxa but didn't know how to turn it into food."

Nearing the end of her term, Entz began compiling her best recipes. The 84-page booklet includes 45 recipes for sweet breads, grain breads, pies, cakes, cookies and quick breads. She also added several pages on flour production.

"They can use flax, sesame, potatoes and many other things to make breads," Entz says. "Maybe in a small way I was able to give back something of what they gave to me. ... It was a dream of mine to make a cookbook for these amazing women. It was a gift for Alesia and the women who worked with me."

Entz called the cookbook, *Panadaria Integral*, which is Spanish for *The Whole-Grain Bakery.*

She has returned to college this fall. But driven by her SALT assignment, Entz switched to a new field of study and a new college. She is studying baking science and management and milling science at Kansas State University in Manhattan.—*John Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

> It was a dream of mine to make a cookbook for these amazing women.
>
> —*Sharon Entz*

Colleges score high in magazine survey

The four General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church four-year colleges in the United States have made the grade, according to one magazine.

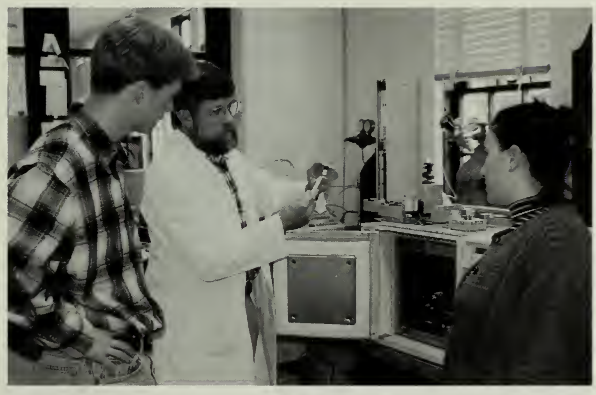
Bethel College in North Newton, Kan.; Bluffton (Ohio) College; Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va.; and Goshen (Ind.) College all placed high in various categories in *U.S. News & World Report*'s annual "America's Best Colleges" guide in its Aug. 31 issue.

Goshen was included among 162 liberal arts colleges considered national in scope. According to the magazine, national schools "tend to require higher college entrance test scores than those in the regional liberal arts category."

EMU was ranked eighth among the top 10 liberal arts colleges in the Southern region. Bethel and Bluffton were named top-tier schools in the Midwest, ranked in the top 25 percent in the region.

U.S. News & World Report determines the "best colleges" according to 16 criteria, including academic reputation, retention, graduation rates, faculty, finances and alumni giving.

EMU and Bluffton were also included among the magazine's "best values" in their respective regions.



June Krehbiel

Richard Zerger, chemistry professor at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., demonstrates laboratory equipment to senior chemistry majors Neil Hamill of Kansas City, Kan. (left), and Zeina Ghaoui of Wichita, Kan. Bethel, Bluffton (Ohio) College, Goshen (Ind.) College and Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.—the four General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church four-year colleges in the United States—were all recognized in this year's *U.S. News & World Report* "America's Best Colleges" issue.

"Best value" selections, reported in U.S. *News & World Report*'s Sept. 7 issue, were figured by dividing the school's quality ranking by the cost to the average student receiving a grant meeting his or need financial need. Other criteria included the percentage of students receiving grants during the previous year and the percent of a school's costs covered by need-based grants.

The case for Anabaptist advocacy

Biblical and theological reasons for challenging the government—part 1

by Wilma Ann Bailey

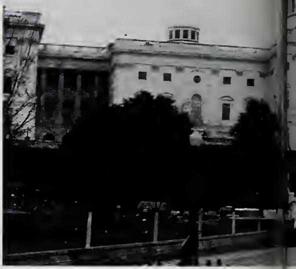
Mennonites, particularly those aware of the persecution experience in the past or within their own lifetimes, have adopted either a skeptical and sometimes negative view of the state or a grateful attitude toward the particular state that provided a refuge for them. Most European-American Mennonites have benefitted tremendously from the government and economic system in the United States; therefore, apart from their objection to military service (and this has been steadily eroding), they are comfortable with the structures and policies in existence. They are more likely to adopt the "quiet in the land" approach and renounce advocacy inappropriate for the faithful Christian.

The oppression of African-Americans was largely at the hand of an economic system that was undergirded by state governments. Intervention by the federal government led to the emancipation of the slaves while some church folk were still quoting: 'Slaves be obedient to your masters.'

The African-American experience is different in that coming to America was not positive. The oppression that African-Americans experienced was in *this* land. The oppression that Native Americans experienced was also in *this* land. The oppression of African-Americans was largely at the hand of an economic system that was undergirded by state governments. Intervention by the federal government led to the emancipation of the slaves while some church folk were still quoting Ephesians 6:5: "Slaves be obedient to your masters."

But the same federal system through the Supreme Court legalized segregation in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in the late 19th century, then prohibited segregation in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954. It was only after the Supreme Court decision that a certain conference in the Mennonite Church stopped practicing segregated Communion (see Leroy Bechler, *The Black Mennonite Church in North America*).

Civil rights and desegregation came not as a direct result of Brown but of the marches, demonstrations and court challenges during the 1950s and '60s, led in large part by religious leaders, particularly pastors such as Martin Luther King Jr. and women such as Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer. It was the federal government that brought justice in the civil rights case against the police officers that tortured Rodney King. It was the federal government that escorted black children to school in Louisiana. It was the federal government that started and provided incentives for such programs as food stamps, the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program and Head Start, all of which have been enormously successful in helping poor children get a healthier start in life.



Many Christians and Jews were influential in bringing these issues to the attention of the government. Advocacy as a method has worked for African-Americans. This is not to say that African-Americans have a lot of confidence in the federal government. They have found it to be more responsive than state governments.

This shows that the stance that Christians take on the subject of advocacy has a lot to do with where they have come from and where they are now socioeconomically and in relation to the state.

Theology of the church: Roy Enquist ("A Paraclete in the Public Square: Toward a Theology of Advocacy" in *Theology and Public Policy*, Fall 1990), lists four Christian views of political advocacy: (1) Christians should be apolitical. They should not be involved at all. (2) Individual Christians may bear witness to the state, but not churches. (3) Faith compels the church to witness to the state. (4) Advocacy is only a pragmatic exercise. Enquist writes that only the third—faith compels the church to bear witness—has credibility and is consistent with biblical teachings and the theology of the church.

Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have

Larry Penner

We, the people, created our government to promote the common good, not to benefit the few. Its sphere of activity is what we delegate to it.

prided themselves on their commitment to the Bible as a source of guidance not only for what they should believe but for what they should do. However, the biblical world was significantly different from our own, in terms of its political and social structures. There were no models of true democracy in the biblical world on the level of the state.

Israel came into being as a collection of tribes and city states. It adopted the most prevalent form of state government at the time, monarchy. When the monarchy failed, Israel became a faith community dispersed under a variety of political structures.

The early church formed largely in the cities of a Mediterranean world that was under the rule of the Roman Empire.

The concept of "citizen" probably developed in the Greek city-states. But full citizenship was usually restricted to a few elite adult males who claimed descent from earlier citizens on one or both sides of their family. Individuals did not acquire the rights of citizens just by being born in a particular place. Roman citizens had rights that others who lived in the empire did not possess, as we see in the example of Paul in the New Testament. He could appeal to Caesar on the basis of his Roman citizenship. There was no appeal for noncitizens.

In the Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln said the government of the United States is "of the people, by the people and for the people." This is a different reality from that of the kingdoms and empires of the ancient Near East. We, the people, created our government to promote the common good, not to benefit the few. Its sphere of activity is what we delegate to it. The people are the government. Every citizen cannot carry out all the responsibilities of governance, so we choose individuals to represent us on every level. Nevertheless, every adult citizen has not only the right but the duty to keep the government on track through vote and voice.

Mennonite sociologist John Redekop has noted that there is a "blurring of the clear distinction between government and those who govern" in modern democracies that call for a rethinking of the old theology of separation. Theologically Redekop understands the role of government in the modern world to be to provide order and restrain evil among people who have chosen not to follow Christ. An orderly society benefits the church in that it facilitates its functioning in the world. Moreover, he believes Christians ought to be good citizens and the government's "most perceptive and reliable critics."

Noting these differences between the ancient Near Eastern world and our own, we find there are many examples of advocacy to the government in the Bible and statements to the effect that this is a duty of Christians and Jews.

God's law: An advocate is "one who pleads, intercedes or speaks for or on behalf of another; a pleader, an intercessor, defender" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). William Lazareth (see bibliography on page 10) finds a confirmation for the role of the advocate in the theology of creation. "Advocacy for justice" he writes, "witnesses to the universal sovereignty of God's law over all creation. [God] is the Lord of the nations as well as the Savior of the Church."

On a basic level, Robert Neff, in his article "The Biblical Basis for Political Advocacy" (*Brethren Life and Thought*, 1987), wrote of the general idea of biblical advocacy. He affirmed that "to have someone to speak on our behalf is at the core of our understanding of what Christ has done for us." He points to the New Testament phrase, "We have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1). The Greek word for advocate in this verse is "paraclete."

There are a number of examples of individuals who served in advocacy roles to governments in the Hebrew Bible. Abraham is an advocate on behalf of the people of Sodom when he questions God's decision to destroy the city: "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" (Genesis 18:23).

continued on page 10

Where to write

In the United States:

Mennonite Central
Committee U.S.
Washington Office
110 Maryland Ave.,
N.E., #502
Washington, DC 20002

U.S. House
of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

In Canada:

MCC Canada
Ottawa Office
803-63 Sparks St.
Ottawa, ON K1P 5A6

House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

It is wrong to punish the righteous with the wicked, he asserts. Abraham boldly confronts God with the rhetorical question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" (18:23).

Abraham is unsuccessful in his attempt to save Sodom, for not even 10 righteous are found in the city. But an important point is made and a pattern is established. The point is that only those who do the evil should be punished. The pattern is that when it appears that a wrong is about to be done, it is incumbent upon the righteous individual to speak for those who may be in danger even though they are not aware of it.

People of faith, whether in a theocratic kingdom or another type of state, used advocacy to the government as a way to meet their own needs or the needs of others who were suffering.

Moses, too, is an advocate. He speaks on behalf of the Israelites when they are in bondage in Egypt. At God's insistence, Moses appeals to the Egyptian pharaoh on behalf of the Israelite slaves. Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, he proclaims, told him to confront the political authorities on behalf of God's suffering people.

Another example is taken from 1 Kings 11-12. There Solomon chooses a man by the name of Jeroboam and sets him over the forced labor. In the course of carrying out his duties, Jeroboam observes the hardship being imposed on the people by excessive forced labor. After the death of Solomon, he appeals to the new king, Rehoboam, to ease the burden on the people. When Rehoboam refuses, Jeroboam leads the northern Israelite tribes as they secede from the union. The northern tribes form a new government that will be more responsive to the common folk.

Redistribution of income: Another example is found in Nehemiah 5, where the common people appeal directly to the highest authority in the land, the governor, to redress a problem they face. They are being impoverished due to debt. They do not go through the regular channels to have their grievances addressed—the court—because those channels are controlled by the elite, who are the source of the problem. The governor, Nehemiah, who is functionally an official of the Persian court, calls for a redistribution of income. The rich are to give back what they have taken from the poor, even though they apparently received it legally.

In another example, Esther, the Jewish queen in the Persian court, is called to serve as advocate on behalf of her people to the Persian king. She is told to speak to the king. Mordechai, her uncle, warns her that she cannot expect that she will escape if there is a slaughter of the Jews. She is one of them and it is incumbent upon her to speak on their behalf because she is articulate and has access to the king. "Who knows," says Mordechai, "perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). Esther does speak up and prevents a slaughter of the Jewish people.

In the New Testament, Jesus' self-professed mission is to "bring good news to the poor … to proclaim release to the captives … to let the oppressed go free" (Luke 4:18). Jesus can accomplish this, either in the role of king or the role of advocate. Jesus chooses not to exercise the former role during his ministry, but he speaks frequently as an advocate for the poor and the needy.

From these examples, we see that people of faith, whether in a theocratic kingdom or another type of state, used advocacy to the government as a way to meet their own needs or the needs of others who were suffering.

Wilma Ann Bailey teaches Old Testament at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., and is a member of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. board and executive committee. This is the first of a two-part series based on a talk she gave at the 1996 MCC Washington Office Spring Seminar. Part 2 will appear in next week's issue.

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More room for God

A reflection on Psalm 19

by Mitchell Brown

We live in a world dominated by a scientific worldview that seems to crowd religion out. Despite the great benefits we have received from the fruits of science, we sometimes long for an earlier time, with more room for wonder, more room for God.

Psalm 19, a wonderfully prescientific poem of God, speaks to this point: "The heavens declare the glory of God, the vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork" (19:1, NJB). The physical order of the universe, the overwhelming power we see in nature, the beauty of mathematics, all are celebrated in this psalm. The psalmist is a scientist who looks at the world and marvels, since God has something to do with the profound order we see.

We moderns ask, Did God start the machinery and leave it to operate on its own? Does God control nature, or has God left it? The psalmist provides an interesting answer.

"No utterance at all, no speech, not a sound to be heard" (19:3). Why such silence? The heavens declare the glory of God, but they do so without words. They do it by action. Nature does not talk; it simply is. We look at the radiance of the sun and know with the psalmist that nothing can escape its heat.

But the psalmist does not rest in this silence. There is a sound, an utterance that the human ear can hear: "The Law of Yahweh is perfect, refreshment to the soul; the decree of Yahweh is trustworthy, wisdom for the simple; the precepts of Yahweh are honest, joy for the heart; the commandment of Yahweh is pure, light for the eyes" (19:7, 8).

Like the warming sun in the sky, the commandment of God lights our moral world. Nature and the Word stand parallel: two ways of knowing God. One we see and one we do.

Immanuel Kant ends his *Critique of Practical Reason* with these words: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more readily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

What the psalmist knew poetically, Kant came to philosophically over 2,000 years later (and we call Kant's time the Enlightenment).

Our moral world is a world of revelation, not in nature but in the stories of the Bible. Those stories create for us space: refreshment to the soul, wisdom for the simple, joy for the heart, light for the eyes. As the sun gives exterior light, so do the Scriptures give interior light for the soul.

But how do these worlds come together? Do we simply live a dual life, half in nature and half in Scripture?

The psalmist goes on: "The fear of Yahweh is pure, lasting forever; the judgments of Yahweh are true, upright, every one" (19:9). A further step binds the heavens to the soul. This step begins in the fear of God. Without this respect for God we are empty. Laws become mere pharisaism. We must bring a holy fear and reverence to God.

On one side is nature in all its glory; on the other side is law. The two come together in the moment of belief, when we come before God and say, Here I am, Lord. But how can we do this? We are sinful. The psalmist continues, "But who can detect his own failings? Wash away my hidden faults. And from pride preserve your servant, never let it be my master" (19:12, 13). This is why we must fear the Lord. God gives us the law, but in our application we have an inborn tendency to serve not God but ourselves. Here we can only pray: "May the words of my mouth always find favor, and the whispering of my heart, in your presence, Yahweh, my rock, my redeemer" (19:14). The fear of the Lord leads to prayer, to submission, to the knowledge that we cannot do this without help, without the redemption of the Lord. It is this redemption that we know in Jesus.

Jesus continues the knowledge we might call the fear of God. We want it to be easy. We want a seamless world where everything fits.

But there is no simple path from the beauty of nature to the doing of the law. There is an abyss, a great rupture in the fabric of the universe. We call this sin. The picture painted by the philosopher Kant of the heavens above and the law within neglected sin. Thus is the Enlightenment's simplistic picture of reality torn apart by the reality of evil.

God demands of us a holy fear that we come to know more explicitly in the death and resurrection of Jesus. We know this moment of faith in fear and judgment and experience it through prayer. Only by putting ourselves under judgment can we join with God. Or put another way: We see the heavens without; we feel the law within. Both are realms of incredible power—the one physical, the other moral. But we must always recognize that the two come together only in the moment of prayer.

This is what the psalmist teaches: "May the words of my mouth always find favor, and the whispering of my heart, in your presence, Yahweh, my rock, my redeemer."

The fear of the Lord leads to prayer, to submission, to the knowledge that we cannot do this without help, without the redemption of the Lord. It is this redemption that we know in Jesus.

Mitchell Brown is pastor at Evanston (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Trinidad, Tobago church holds annual meeting

HARRISONBURG, Va.—About 25 delegates from the three member congregations of the Mennonite Church of Trinidad and Tobago gathered Aug. 1 for the conference's annual general meeting.

Highlights of the past year, the congregations reported, included baptisms and outreach efforts. Charlieville Mennonite Church hosted an Eastern Mennonite Missions' Youth Evangelism Service team, and a YES team is helping Cornerstone Ministries begin construction of a new church building.

On Aug. 2, the Charlieville congregation celebrated its 15th anniversary.

The Trinidad and Tobago church emerged out of Mennonite Church broadcasting and medical work, which started in 1969. Conference membership is about 140.—*Connections*

Nepalese church growing, MBM worker says

ELKHART, Ind.—Although Christianity is not popular in mostly Hindu Nepal, it is tolerated, and the church has more than 2,000 members, reports a longtime Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker in the country.

Churches can now meet officially in relative safety and are allowed to have large meetings in public places. "We can have mass meetings since democracy came [in 1990]," says Miriam Krantz, who has served with MBM in Nepal since 1963. "Well, we have them anyway."

Krantz is a nutritionist who gained international renown for developing a "super flour" made of roasted corn, beans and wheat to provide better nourishment for adults and children. She is now writing a book on nutrition in South Asia, funded by the United Nations Children's Fund.—*MBM and GCMC news services*

Swiss worker offers party alternative

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia—Carnival, the raucous festival that precedes Ash Wednesday, is not a good testimony to Bolivian youth and young people, says Margrit Kipfer. That is why she offers an alternative.

Kipfer was sent to Bolivia by the mission committee of the Swiss Mennonite Church. She also receives support from the Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions.

To keep youth and young people from the temptations of Carnival, Kipfer each year organizes a retreat at the time of the festival. "Instead of saying, 'Well, it's forbidden for you to go drinking, to go dancing, to go to this and that,' it's better to give them an alternative where they can go and have fun and also learn about the Bible, about their life as a Christian," she says. "They are in contact with other Christians instead of with [Carnival participants]."

More than 100 people attended the 1998 retreat, which has outgrown the Mennonite Central Committee retreat center which it uses for the event.—*MBM and GCMC news services*

Youth magazine editor resigns

NEWTON, Kan.—Eddy Hall left the youth magazine *With* at the end of August after eight years as co-editor. He will concentrate his efforts as a church facilities consultant. Carol Duerksen, Hall's co-editor, will continue as the magazine's editor.

With in May received the Evangelical Press Association's Award of Excellence in the youth magazine category. *With* is published by Faith & Life Press.

In addition to editing *With*, Hall wrote and edited for the Foundation Series youth Sunday school curriculum and with Marlene Kropf authored *Praying with the Anabaptists.* —*GCMC News Service*

MCC photo by John Spidaliere

Home in the valley

With help from Eastern Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Central Committee workers, a retreat and conference center for Guatemala's K'eckchi' Mennonite Church is taking shape between the rugged and rocky hills near San Pedro Carcha. Called the Bezalel Center, it features a meeting hall large enough to host several hundred people. The facility also includes classrooms, dormitory rooms and a kitchen.

Events

Peace Mennonite Church, Elyria, Ohio, 15th anniversary celebration, Oct. 10-11. Contact: Allan Patterson, 440-322-7344.

Mennonite Disaster Service Region I annual meeting, Oct. 17, Greenwood, Del.

Marion Mennonite Church, Chambersburg, Pa., centennial celebration, Nov. 6-8. Contact: 717-375-4309.

Workers

Buckwalter, Betty Lou and Bob, Broadway, Va., are beginning three-year assignments with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) Nairobi, Kenya, at the Mennonite Guesthouse.

Burnet, Colleen and Tom, San Diego, are beginning three-year assignments with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Burkina Faso, working at community development and water resources.

Gingerich, Judy, Canby, Ore., is beginning a three-year assignment with MCC in Botswana as a preschool teacher.

Grant, Willroy, Harrisonburg, Va., is beginning a one-year assignment with MCC in Cuba working at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center.

Landis, Jennifer and Lee, Strasburg, Pa., are beginning two-year assignments with EMM at International Christian School in Hong Kong.

Nyce, Ed, Elkhart, Ind., is beginning a three-year assignment with MCC in Sudan as a peace and conflict resolution trainer.

Shenk, David and Grace, Landisville, Pa., are beginning three-year assignments with EMM at Lithuania Christian College in Klaipeda, Lithuania.

Births

Gehman, Colton John, July 28, to Kimberly (Harnish) and Wendell Gehman, Pine Ridge, S.D.

Gunn, Brittany Jean, Aug. 2, to Amy (Senft) and Bryan Gunn, Goshen, Ind.

Heatwole, Alexis Jenae and Avery Nicole (twins), Aug. 6, to Eric and Michelle (Gingerich) Heatwole, Toledo, Ohio.

Hymbaugh, Hannah Lee, Aug. 15, to Jackie (Hassebrock) and John Hymbaugh, Hopedale, Ill.

Knepp, Keegan Lane, July 15, to Brad and Tara (Honn) Knepp, Iowa City, Iowa.

Ladensack, Rebecca Joann, Aug. 12, to Maryanne (Wallace) and Michael Ladensack, Fairview, Mich.

Lehman, Karlee Rachelle, Aug. 19, to Kent and Kim (Ropp) Lehman, Kalona, Iowa.

Miller, Mia Bei Graber, Nov. 8, 1997, received for adoption July 28,1998, by Ann and Keith Graber Miller, Goshen Ind.

Oberg, Anja Ellen, July 1, to Angie (Hunsberger) and Anton Oberg, Sweden.

Schnupp, Matthew Aaron, July 23, to Jeffrey and Susan (Stauffer) Schnupp, Lancaster, Pa.

Waidelich, Jakob Aaron, July 4, 1997, received for adoption July 22, 1998, to Rhonda Waidelich, Pettisville, Ohio.

Wier, Danielle Renae, Aug. 20, to Jason and Sheri (Clemmer) Wier, Goshen, Ind.

Wimmer, Erika Lynne, Aug. 17, to Gary and Kelly (Clemmer) Wimmer, Telford, Pa.

Marriages

Albright/Leichty: Jason Albright, Oxford, Kan., and Kendra Leichty, Wellman, Iowa, June 6, by David Boshart.

Ashway/Miller: Scott Ashway, Chambersburg, Pa., and April Miller, Mercersburg, Pa., June 13, by Cleon Nyce.

Bagget/Bechtel: Christine Bagget, York, Pa., and Mark Bechtel, Oley, Pa., June 13, by Roy Yoder.

Bailey/Groenewold: Kara Bailey, Riverside, Iowa, and Stephen Groenewold, Iowa City, Iowa, Aug. 15, by Jay Miiller and Kathryn Franzenburg.

Barnhart/Bitikofer: Dori Ann Barnhart, Newville, Pa., and Kurt Bitikofer, Greencastle, Pa., July 25, by Cleon Nyce.

Bert/Stambaugh: Daryl Bert, Moundville, Pa., and Carrie Stambaugh, Millersburg, Ohio, July 11, by Tom Michaels.

Bieber/Estep: Shane Bieber, Whitefish, Mont., and Andrea Estep, Fulks Run, Va., Aug. 1, by Jeryl Hollinger.

Burchell/Martin: Heather Burchell, Susquehanna, Pa., and Jason Martin, New Milford, Pa., Aug. 8, by Blaine Detwiler.

Claassen/Gingerich: Ryan Claassen, Goshen, Ind., and Amy Gingerich, Goshen, Aug. 1, by Diane Zaerr.

Courtney/Yoder: Amy Courtney, Berlin, Ohio, and Joe Yoder, Sugarcreek, Ohio, June 12, by Tom Michaels.

Dengler/Kaufman: Rebecca Dengler, Goshen, Ind., and Josh Kaufman, Goshen, Aug. 1, by Nancy Kauffmann.

Elias/van Pelt: Morlin Elias, Seattle, and Juli van Pelt, Seattle, July 18, by Weldon Nisly.

Johnson/Preheim: Norma Johnson, Newton, Kan., and Vern Preheim, North Newton, Kan., Aug. 22, by Darrell Fast, Laura Loewen and John Esau.

Koontz/Scott: Matthew Koontz, North Newton, Kan., and Jenni Scott, Hutchinson, Kan., July 3, by Darrell Fast.

Lindenmeyer/Unruh: Daniel Lindenmeyer, Newton, Kan., and Julie Unruh, Newton, July 25, by Darrell Fast.

Mathew/Schrock: Johncey Mathew, Lancaster, Pa., and Kristin Schrock, Lancaster, Aug. 15, by Frank Peachey.

Mitchell/Wyse: Mark Mitchell, Sewell, N.J., and Rita Wyse, Archbold, Ohio, Aug. 1, by Rocky Miller.

Moyer/Mummau: Keith Moyer, Thompsontown, Pa., and Mashelle Mummau, East Waterford, Pa., July 18, by Roy Brubaker.

Rohrer/Santello: Sanford Rohrer, Wadsworth, Ohio, and Marge Santello, Natick, Mass., Aug. 15, by James Mohr.

Salim/Yoder: Ismail Salim, Lancaster, Pa., and Melanie Yoder, Wellman, Iowa, Aug. 15, by David Boshart.

Short/Zeiset: Joel Short, Archbold, Ohio, and Karen Zeiset, Aug. 8.

Deaths

Crossgrove, Chauncey, 76, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 17 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Kathryn; children Stephen, Nancy, Ruth Ann Yoder, Alan, Lois Stoltzfus; 10 grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 20 at Stryker, Ohio, by Mark Miller and Wendy Miller.

Fretz, John Emerson, 94, Lansdale, Pa., died Aug. 12. Survivors: wife, Arlene; children Philip, Beverly Brown, Barbara Crossette; stepchildren Lowell Reiff, Dennis Reiff, Wanda Schirmer; 13 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service Aug. 22 by Gary Stenson.

Grieser, Dale, 72, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 4 of multiple myeloma. Survivors: wife, Dorothy; children Kathleen, Cynthia Williams, Barbara, Sara, Jonathan; two grandchildren. Body donated for medical research.

Grove, Elizabeth Reist, 93, Marietta, Pa., died Aug. 21. Survivors: children Vida, Michael; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 24 at Mount Joy, Pa., by Joe Sherer.

Hauder, Leona Zimmerman, 84, Milford, Neb., died Aug. 14. Survivors: husband, Harry; children Richard, Maynard; 10 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 17 at Milford by William Saltzman, Lloyd Gingerich and Anthony Troyer.

Keim, Mary Miller, 90, Kokomo, Ind., died July 7. Survivors: children Esther Kendall, Josephine Fox, Walter; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: July 11 at Kokomo by Lee Miller.

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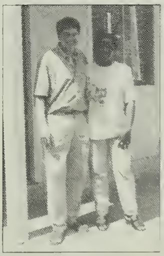

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Kresse, John, 89, Cleveland, died Aug. 15. Survivors: children John Jr., Marianne McMichael, Patricia Stepnicka, Robert; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 19 at Bedford Heights, Ohio, by David Orr.

Landis, Glen, 51, Wilsonville, Ore., died July 20 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Tess; children Todd, Chad; parent, Ruth Shank Landis. Memorial service July 23 by Brent Kauffman.

Miller, Perry Edward, 77, Leo, Ind., died Aug. 9 of emphysema and bronchitis. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Margaret Ann Slone, Herb, Denny, Cindy Rogers; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Aug. 12 at Leo by Charles Desanto and Brooks Fetters.

Plett, Bertha, 84, Beaver, Okla., died July 24. Survivors: children Charles, Jane Hamm; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Burial: July 28 at Turpin, Okla., by Eric Deckert.

Short, Pearl B. Smith, 90, Westland, Mich., died Aug. 14. Survivors: daughter, Merna; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 18 at Stryker, Ohio, by Mark Miller, Wendy Miller and Walter Stuckey.

Snyder, Iva Schrock, 78, Albany, Ore., died July 28. Survivors: husband, Allen; children Mim Schwartz, Marylin Rush, Myrene Geiser, Kimberly Headings; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: July 31 at Woodburn, Ore., by Richard Regier.

Stutzman, Fannie Boshart, 98, Albany, Ore., died July 27. Survivors: children Bernice Wideman, Doris, Leon, Berdella, David; 11 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 31 at Albany by Brent Kauffman.

Tschetter, Paul Glanzer, 91, Freeman, S.D., died Aug. 1 of an aneurysm. Survivors: children Lois Hjelmstad, Paul, Janis Schoonmaker; 17 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren. Memorial service Aug. 9 at Denver by Vernon Rempel. Cremated.

Yoder, Grace Brenneman, 83, West Liberty, Ohio, died Aug. 12. Survivors: Patricia, Julia. Burial: Aug. 17 at West Liberty by Alvin Yoder.

Classifieds

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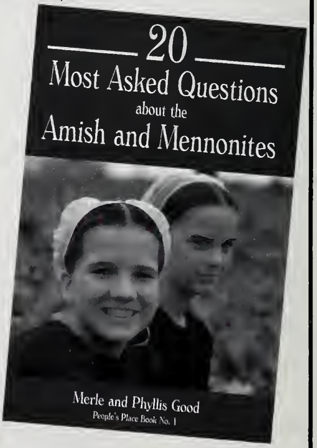

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A six-month gender checkup of *The Mennonite*

by Cathleen Hockman-Wert

The topic of gender in journalism has recurred in *The Mennonite* ever since it premiered with no women on its editorial staff. The most recent examples appeared in the letters and news sections. At issue was the coverage of the June Women Doing Theology conference by a male editor.

As a female Mennonite journalist, I have a vested interest in this sort of thing. But I am far less concerned about who covers any particular event than I am about the broader picture. How are women's perspectives, stories, visions represented overall?

The completion of the first six months of *The Mennonite* seems an appropriate time for a gender check-up, and I did some counting. Who are the writers, the opinion-givers, the storytellers?

I found that considerably more news articles were written by women (61) than by men (39), if those written by *The Mennonite* staff are disregarded (an additional 28 by men, sometimes with news releases). Another 33 stories were not attributed. These numbers testify to the efforts Mennonite agencies have made to hire women in their public relations offices. Fine articles, lots of them, are being produced by female staff writers.

The features section also was balanced, with 32 articles of varying length by women (including five by agency staff writers) and 30 by men (including two by a staff writer); three other feature articles and sidebars were written by an editor on *The Mennonite*'s staff, and two stories were team-written by male and female writers.

In "Readers Say," however, letters by men outnumbered those from women by more than two to one (163 to 68, not counting ambiguous names like "Lee"). And the rotating columns on the next-to-last page were all by men. Most of these were by the editors, but even Speaking Out, which appeared six times, was always written by a man.

Other than these last two categories, *The Mennonite*'s first six months were remarkably balanced, gender-wise, in writers. When I worked for *Gospel Herald*, I noticed that we didn't get an even representation of male and female feature writers. I wondered then whether the numbers reflected the lower percentage of women pastors; features often were developed from sermons.

With letters to the editor, plenty of theories explain the lack of participation by women. Maybe it's just lack of interest. The recent Mennonite Church-General Conference Mennonite Church survey (June 2 issue) found that women are less likely to be aware of the upcoming merger; perhaps lack of knowledge makes women unwilling to assert opinions. Some may feel that speaking up is not their rightful place or that their ideas aren't important or valued.

We hear about women's "double day" of household and childcare work in addition to full-time jobs. Who has time to spend crafting thoughtful reflections for a church publication?

Then again, some women prefer to express their thoughts in a different setting. Women may be less willing to set themselves up to being attacked, and the tone of Readers Say disinclines them to jump into the fray.

I'm not always convinced that the church needs more women to speak up. I tend to think instead that more men should hush up and let us all quietly seek the Spirit's guidance. But hey—I'm a communicator by trade, and the dialogue must go on, especially in preparation for St. Louis 99. I am grateful for the forum provided by our church publications.

I'm not always convinced that the church needs more women to speak up. I tend to think instead that more men should hush up and let us all quietly seek the Spirit's guidance.

As discussion continues in *The Mennonite*'s next six months, here are a few thoughts:

To the editors: In a publication edited by men, special care must be taken to include women's voices. I encourage you to continue to seek out female writers, perhaps especially for page 15. Thank you, Gordon, for soliciting this article.

To men: Do not cease to seek out diligently the ideas and opinions of those unlikely to volunteer them: not just women but those of our many different ethnic backgrounds and ages. Do not be afraid of silences, which may be necessary before some can speak.

To women: Who gives speech to mortals? Is it not the Lord? Do not be afraid to speak the truth given you.

God grant us the grace to hear each other.

Cathleen Hockman-Wert is editor of Timbrel, *the publication of Mennonite Women, and a former associate editor of* Gospel Herald. *She lives quietly in Eugene, Ore., where she enjoys counting things.*

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Rich Preheim

Closing the distance between siblings

It is true that members of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) in the United States and Canada are sisters and brothers in the faith. But maybe some of us need to be twins for the sake of fellowship across the border.

The plan to form the new Mennonite Church into parallel U.S. and Canadian entities has left some folks fearing for the future of Mennonite church relations between the two countries. An artificial barrier is going to divide us integrated siblings, critics worry, and those responsible for organizing the family reunion need to find ways to overcome that. Otherwise the merger will just be a reconfiguration of two groups into two different groups, this time organized according to national boundaries.

The Integration Committee is aware of all that. The committee is charged with linking the two country bodies, and that includes addressing issues such as binational conventions, delegate bodies, boards and programs. Binational fellowship can certainly occur in such contexts. But it goes beyond the structural and the organizational to the interpersonal. Such relationships are a core element of community. And the core of the church is the local gathered body of believers. That is why the onus for developing fellowship rests as much with congregations as with integration leaders.

One example of nuturing fellowship among members comes from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. As part of its evolution into an integrated countrywide body, the CMC has introduced a twinning program to connect congregations in Ontario with those in western Canada. The goal, of course, is to build bridges between two groups of the church which don't know much about each other.

The onus for developing fellowship rests as much with congregations as with integration leaders.

If U.S. and Canadian congregations could connect in a similar fashion, then maybe we could understand why the church will be structured into two country groups in the first place.

Underlying all this talk of fellowship are issues of how exactly the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church now have binational fellowship and how that may take shape in the new Mennonite Church. For most congregations, their relationships with their religious siblings on the other side of the border will probably not be affected by the merger. That's because most U.S. and Canadian congregations don't have much personal connection with each other. And we cannot lament the loss of something we never really had in the first place.

Sure, we have that which ties together the integrated church's members in both countries. We can use the same Sunday school materials, support the same seminary and adopt the same confession of faith. Some of us have the same historical background. A few of us may even go to the same churchwide convention every few years. All these are important in developing a sense of common identity, and all these will probably continue in some way under the integrated church. After all, we will all be in the same church.

But none of this is the same as actually having an interpersonal relationship with someone from the other country. A Floridian may meet a British Columbian at a convention—or may not. A pastor in Colorado may keep in touch with a seminary friend now serving in Ontario. And church administrators and board members on both sides of the border are in regular contact with each other. For the average person in the pew, however, being in fellowship is a nice idea but doesn't have a lot of practical application. And no amount of church structure is realistically going to change that.

Common identity and beliefs do not necessarily have to mean intentional interpersonal contact. Fellowship can happen in such a community facilitated by structure and program.

But if church members desire a deeper fellowship, one based on binational interpersonal relationships, we should pursue twinning projects and other initiatives. To suggest such measures is not meant to be naive. They take work and energy at the local level. And if they fail, which is a possibility, we may have to acknowledge being distant relatives in the same family of faith. But at least we tried.—*rp*

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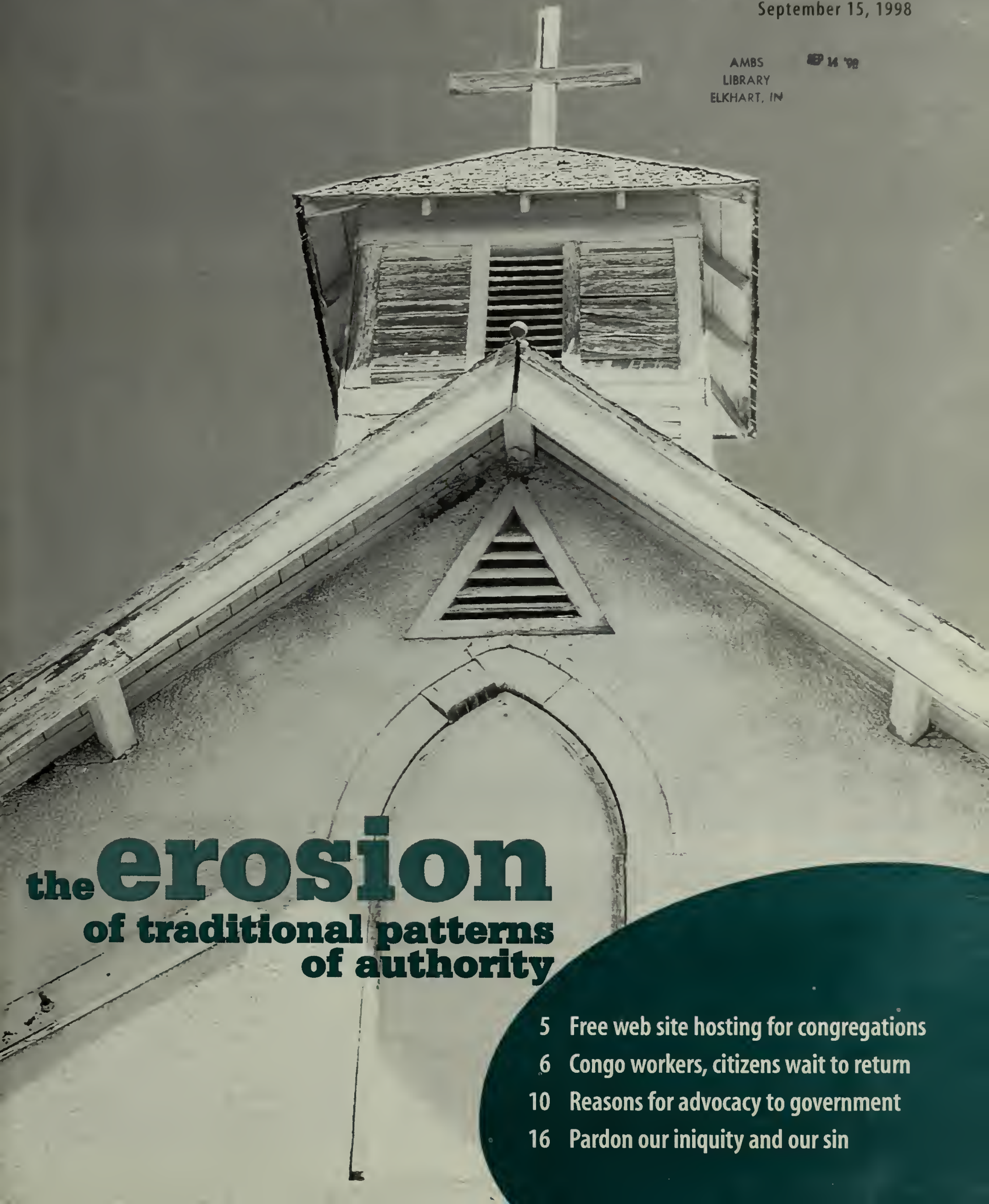

the erosion of traditional patterns of authority

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10 Reasons for advocacy to government
16 Pardon our iniquity and our sin

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Reasons to weep, reasons to change

It was like a breath of fresh air to read Ronald J. Sider's article, "Jesus Must Weep" (Aug. 25). We have become one of the most hedonistic, materialistic societies of all time, and Christendom seems to have joined right in. If that wasn't bad enough, there are evangelicals who support tax cuts and a flat tax which would give the wealthy the biggest tax cut in history at a time when their wealth has never been greater. For example, Bill Gates increased his net worth by $12 billion in 1997. If one lived to be 80 years old, one would have to spend over $410,000 every day to spend $12 billion. And we want to give tax cuts to the wealthy? And where are Christians with their measly 2.46 percent giving? They are building bigger and fancier houses, doing more foreign travel, going on cruises—simply spending more on themselves and less on those who hurt and less for those who insist on spreading the gospel.

Indeed, Jesus must weep. Fortunately, as in the days of Elijah, when God revealed to him that there were still 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal, I believe we still have the equivalent of 7,000 who have not bowed to our hedonistic society. But like in the time of Elijah, when Israel was not spared from drought, I don't believe the United States will be spared either. Sadly, I don't hear anyone preaching about it. Yeah, it's tough, with advertising on all sides and pleasures and comforts abounding everywhere. But can anyone say that that absolves us of our responsibility to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Christ?—*James Faul, North Newton, Kan.*

A hearty amen regarding Sider's article. My wife and I will continue to support the church from local to wider areas. However, we also need to target movements to meet specific and special needs. We enjoy giving support to the International Eye Foundation (I am bedfast and blind). Working with government health departments, the foundation is a catalyst in preventing blindness. Amazing things are happening. Mectizan, the miracle drug, can prevent or cure river blindness with an annual dose for 10 years. The drug is donated by Merck.

My point is that this challenge is doable. While we cannot solve all problems, we can join in a project which is so urgent and doable. I believe we are at the threshold of a new awakening when we will more nearly follow the Bible mandate as Sider so clearly points out.—*Andrew R. Shelly, Newton, Kan.*

A question of idolatry

Thank you, Bradley Siebert, for "Are We Turning the Bible into a Graven Image" (Aug. 11). That took me back to my own pilgrimage with the Bible. As a child, I imagined God pouring the message into a hole in the writers' heads, which then came out on paper word for word. Even as an adult, I was horrified the first time I saw the word "bible" in print without a capital B. Not many years ago I met a man who told his child, 'You don't lay any other book on the Bible." Yes, the way we think and talk about the Bible may amount to idolatry.

It has taken me a long time to realize that the writers of the Bible were humans as we are, albeit tuned into God and their walk with Jesus. We idolize characters in Bible stories even though their dirty laundry hangs out for all the world to read. I have to identify with them rather than idolizing them, knowing that God forgave and loved them and does so with us. The Bible means more to me this way. *—Kathrine Rempel, Colorado Springs, Colo.*

Journalistic integrity requires an article in response to "Are We Turning the Bible into a Graven Image?" by someone committed to the infallibility of the Holy Bible. We ask the editors to print such an article. We are not "tempted to self-righteousness" or "idolatry" by believing God's Book is infallible. The Bible tells us: Idolatry and self-righteousness come from unregenerate, disobedient hearts.

"The essential book of the church," the article's author writes, is the most compelling description of the Bible. "We can't get along without it." The Mormons, Muslims or Hindus can't get along without their books either. That statement says nothing about the inherent nature of the books in question. It only indicates the imputed value of the book by its adherents. If there is no objective infallibility of the word being read, on what basis does one accept a subjective inspiration of it?

People, let us pray for a renewed love of God and respect for his Word in our Mennonite denomination.—*Tim and Melody Landis, Mountain Home, Idaho*

Have we ever asked if Jesus and the apostles considered the Old Testament to be infallible? Perhaps we are trying to be more biblical than the Bible. The word "infallible" is never used in the Scriptures. But Jesus' comment in Matthew 19:8 about Deuteronomy 24:1-4 being given by Moses "because your hearts were

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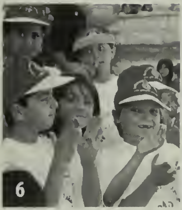

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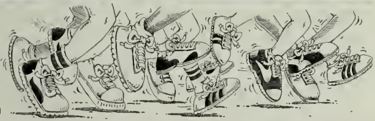

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s say readers say

hard" is hard to construe as an affirmation of infallibility. It is obvious to me that this comment would be applied by Jesus to a number of other Old Testament passages where his teachings are different.

I accept 2 Timothy 3:16—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—as written without trying to read infallibility into it. Hebrews 11 honors "a great cloud of witnesses" for their faith, not for their perfection or infallibility. Hebrews 12:2 goes on to say, "Fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." He is the infallible teacher of God's perfect will.—*Ben Kenagy, Albany, Ore.*

Take the necessary steps

It struck me that the Aug. 18 issue's cover of a smiling young white woman holding a child of color is a politically correct image for multiculturalism that is still racist. It's an image for powerful but nice white people who "help" people of color. I long for the day when we will view a picture of a smiling young African-American man holding a child of European descent—and our first impulse will be to return the smile.

"Strangers United in Peace" (Aug. 18) brings together historical, biblical and theological perspectives of multiculturalism and anti-racism in the church with much sensitivity. It provided the missing piece in the other article, "What It Takes to Become a Multicultural Church."

Valuing the differences of our cultures, relinquishing power and laying aside our need to make others like ourselves are necessary steps on the way to embracing people of other cultures with love. This happens when we regularly receive and incorporate all the cultural expressions of the spiritual gifts that Jesus has given the church.—*Sharon K. Williams, Franconia Conference Damascus Road team leader, Souderton, Pa.*

Cover photo
by Mark Pavlik

When it might be easier to ... buy every Teenie Beanie Baby or Power Ranger in sight, it might be better to stand back and think about what is best in the long run for our children.

—Jamie Mitchell Molitoris, "Simplicity Isn't Simple," Aug. 11

Simple discussions

We really appreciated "Simplicity Isn't Simple," by Jamie Mitchell Molitoris (Aug. 11). The ages of our kids are the same as her two children, and we found it helpful to sit down and read sections to them. Gift giving and receiving can often get out of hand at birthdays and Christmas. But reading about making gifts, enjoying fewer gifts and looking into the eyes of a person who gives a gift were welcome ideas for us to engage our daughters with this topic. Please continue to print articles that allow for these sorts of family discussions. *—Ted and Nancy Lewis, Pawnee Rock, Kan.*

Making judgments

Thank you, Iowa-Nebraska Conference, for not casting sufficient votes to expel Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis ("Unexpected Iowa-Nebraska Expulsion Vote Fails," Aug. 18). I have been ill and could not be at conference, but I feared something like this would come.

Who understands better the spiritual life of the congregation than those who fill the pews each Sunday? I would guess that before the congregation accepted those members in question, there were many tears, prayers and fasting. Who am I, 250 miles away, to criticize them and make better judgments than they do?

Where do we go from here? Pray for the congregation in Minneapolis. Visit the church. Become acquainted with some of the members.*—Clarence R. Sutter, Mount Pleasant, Iowa*

Power and sex

I would like to thank J. Lorne Peachey for the Aug. 18 editorial. I, too, read *The Christian Century* interview with Max Stackhouse et al. and enjoyed his comment about our Mennonite challenge to coercive power. I think Peachey is exactly right that we may be distracted as part of a wider sexual and cultural struggle.

The difficulty is that there are those of us who want to accept gays and lesbians into our churches and others who do not, with strong feelings all around. So we must debate. But while we debate, we do well to keep more than half an eye on the powers. The powers will not wait for us to settle our arguments about who's in and who's out of the Mennonite Church. They will proceed with missiles, crushing economic force and public relations propaganda to maintain the status quo of the disparity and injustice that stains God's world.*—Vern Rempel, Denver*

I find it very sad and strange that Peachey has written an editorial regarding the relative unimportance of sexuality issues. We have watched the President of the United States appear on national TV and admit to an extramarital affair. To make matters worse, he probably committed perjury to cover it up. And you are telling us that we shouldn't worry that much about sexuality issues?

I used to handle divorce cases for a living. I can tell you from that experience that sexual immorality causes just as much grief and heartache as do issues of peace, justice and reconciliation (or lack thereof). Why do sexual standards have to be downplayed for the sake of these issues?*—Edward Hall, Lanham, Md.*

Heeding the God of plenty

I would like to speak to the gentleman from New Mexico (Readers Say, Aug. 18) who recommends we eat no meat or dairy products and have only enough clothing to keep us warm. We serve a God of plenty. Meat and dairy products are two of the basic seven food groups our bodies need. Adequate clothing to function is also needed in our society.

"My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). He's not saying overindulge, but there is adequate. He didn't say, "Unless the earth has an overabundance of people, then you have to cut back."

The problem lies in two areas: (1) God intended for us to ask him for wisdom to operate this planet. "Ask of me and I will tell you great and mighty things you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3). There is technology yet undiscovered to farm the sea and cause the desert to bloom as a rose if we would, as a nation, ask. (2) The waste of human resources due to war, crime, careless living and ignorance is without measure. Much good food is thrown out by restaurants. Nutrition is lost in overprocessing. Poor eating habits lead to illness.

Sin limits God's blessings. It all comes back to our country getting back to God.*—Anita Swartzendruber, Wayland, Iowa*

Seeing the wicked

I had to wonder what on earth Bernadette McGurrin ("Wrapped in an Angel's Wings," Aug. 18) was thinking when she "drew up her son to see for himself 'the reward of the wicked' " at the U.S. Capitol shooting. What about the guards who also were shot? Were they also "wicked"? The praying that was done was great, and the feeling of being wrapped in angel wings must have been truly wonderful. But to purposely show an 8-year-old someone who has just been shot to keep him from "going away afraid" shows a very poor sense of judgment.*—Sue Eicher, Archbold, Ohio*

Returning to the Land of the Rising Sun

Assignment has air of familiarity for COM-MBM couple

When Kaz and Lois Enomoto went to Tokyo last month to start a term with the Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions, they weren't worried about culture shock or different food. Lois had already served in Japan for two years, and Kaz was simply going home.

Originally from a town south of Osaka, Japan, Kaz was working in Osaka when he met Lois, who taught English with Mennonite Brethren Missions/Service from 1991 to 1993. "I was eating in a pizza restaurant when a whole group of Americans walked in," he says. "I just wanted to practice my English."

Attracted by the joy and presence of the group he had met, Kaz began attending church with them. He and Lois eventually began dating, and they were married in 1994 in Oklahoma, where Lois grew up.

The Enomotos had lived in Fresno, Calif., since then. After graduating from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, they began looking for mission opportunities. "We were looking for something that would work for both of us," Lois says. "I had lived in Japan for two years, so I was open to going back."

They originally looked into going to Japan with the Mennonite Brethren mission board. "They didn't know when they would have a position open," Kaz says. "We didn't want to wait too long."

In Tokyo, the Enomotos will run a guest house in Tokyo, and Kaz will serve as director of the Tokyo Anabaptist Center. "I'll be a resource person," he says. "There will be a lot to do, like a lecture series and seminars."

COM/MBM photo by Rachel Lewis

Kaz and Lois Enomoto

Although both Lois and Kaz have lived in Japan, their new life together will offer new challenges and experiences. While biracial marriages are becoming more and more common in Japanese cities, the Enomotos will face the challenge of raising their 4-month-old daughter, Erika, in two different cultures.

"We'll just take it one day at a time," Lois says.

In addition to readjusting to life in Japan, Lois will also work on learning Japanese. "I've tried having Kaz teach me, but it just doesn't work," she says. "We need to have a more professional relationship. It's too easy to back out of studying."—*Rachel Lewis for GCMC and MBM news services*

Germans dedicate library, archives

Fifty years after German Mennonites decided to start gathering materials about their history and culture, a new home for the collection was dedicated on Sept. 5.

The Mennonitische Forschungstelle in Weierhof has about 15,000 titles, including Mennonite World Conference materials, congregational records and records from the German Mennonite conferences. In addition to work and research accommodations, the new facility includes exhibit space, archival space, a bookbinding room, an apartment and a guest room for visitors.

For the past 30 years, the collection had been housed in the attic of the Weierhof secondary school.

New project wants to put the 'on' into online

GOSHEN, Ind.—Thanks to Goshen College and Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA), Mennonite congregations and agencies may find it easier to get on the information superhighway.

The two organizations have purchased the domain name "Mennonite.net," and the college will offer free web site hosting to Mennonite congregations and agencies, free domain names ("churchname.mennonite.net") and free design consulting. The consulting will be done by a team of Goshen students on a first-come, first-serve basis. MMA is providing start-up funding plus consulting help.

"What we've found is that the logistical and technical barriers to getting on the web are simply too high for many congregations and church agencies," says Michael Sherer, Goshen's director of information technology services. "We want to help eliminate those barriers."

MMA CEO Howard Brenneman calls Mennonite.net "the right idea at the right time."

"It meets real needs in the church," he says, "especially the needs of young adults who are often underserved by the church."

From refugee camp to summer camp

MCC offers encouragement to homeless Palestinians

EAST JERUSALEM, West Bank—For 12-year-old Nisreen, home is a camp. She is a member of one of 23 families who live in Sumoud, the most recent Palestinian refugee camp.

Alarmed by increased Israeli efforts to rid Jerusalem of Palestinians, Mennonite Central Committee staff felt the need to offer encouragement to the families, even in a symbolic way. So with the help of a Palestinian social organization, MCC sent Nisreen and 50 other children from Sumoud to another camp—summer camp.

MCC provided a grant to send the 51 children to local summer camps run by Palestinian organizations in Jerusalem.

"I like playing sports and all of the activities," Nisreen says. "We get to take field trips —to Tiberias and Birzeit and even to the beach."

MCC Jerusalem development officer Sahir Dajani came up with the summer camp idea after visiting Sumoud. "We wanted to help the children and mothers at Sumoud and raise awareness among the local Palestinian community regarding the problem of the Israeli confiscation of Jerusalem identity cards," Dajani says. "That is why we asked a local women's organization to accept the Sumoud children as participants in their summer camp program."

Without identity cards, Palestinians are forced to leave the city and cannot return for work, study, worship or health care without permission from Israeli military authorities. The number of card confiscations has increased in recent years. In 1995, authorities siezed 96 cards. That jumped to 689 in 1996 and 606 in 1997. Another 500 cases are under review.

While some camp residents are facing the loss of their cards, others have been left homeless by the demolition of their houses by the Israeli military. Still others cannot afford the high rents of living in Jerusalem.

MCC photo by Carmen Pauls

Palestinian children clap and sing during a summer camp in Jerusalem. A Mennonite Central Committee grant paid this year for 51 children from a refugee camp to attend summer camp operated by a Palestinian social organization.

After having their original camp destroyed by Jerusalem municipal authorities in April, Sumoud residents relocated to an unfinished building on mosque property just down the road from MCC's Jerusalem office. Makeshift walls of wood and plastic divide the unfinished building into "apartments." Water is brought from a nearby mosque. Residents use portable toilets while they construct permanent ones in the building's courtyard.—*Carmen Pauls for MCC News Service*

MCC Congo workers bide their time in South Africa

DURBAN, South Africa—Nearly a month after leaving Congo for South Africa, six Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers hope to return to the strife-riven country in several weeks. In the meantime, they are volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and a social service agency working with children and youth.

"We have wanted to use this time in limbo to continue serving where possible," says Bruce Campbell-Janz, co-director of MCC's Congo program.

Janz says the MCC workers are in daily contact with Kinshasa, Congo's capital, and report no problems for Mennonites in the city.

Meanwhile, two Congolese leaders now in North America are unable to return home. Fimb Ganvunze, president of the largest Mennonite conference in Congo, has been in the United States since July, when he attended the Mennonite World Conference executive committee meeting in Elkhart, Ind. He is now pursuing English studies in Pennsylvania. Pakisa Tshmika, Africa secretary for Mennonite Brethren Missions/Service International, also left Congo before the problems erupted and cannot return.—*MCC News Service*

Kenyan survives embassy explosion

Among the survivors of last month's explosion at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi was a Kenyan who attended Michigan State University Mennonite Fellowship in Lansing while working on his doctorate from 1985 to 1989.

David Kitonga, a regional coordinator for the U.S.-based Christian ministry organization Partners International, and Ann, his wife, were in the embassy for visas when the blast occurred.

"There was an explosion which sounded like a big cannon," Kitonga wrote in an email to friends. "A few seconds following, I heard a deafening explosion outside and the whole ceiling fell on us. Heavy smoke and dust filled the room."

The Kitongas crawled outside through two security doors which had been blown away by the explosion.

The Kitongas reported still feeling sore and "still coughing black substances."

MBM workers strive for positive church identity in suspicious French religious culture

ELKHART, Ind.—Linda Oyer was scrambling between classes at the European Bible Institute in Lamorlaye, France, when she received an unexpected phone call. "I'm searching for God," the woman on the other end said. "How can you help me?"

"You don't get phone calls like that every day," says Oyer, a Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker in Paris. Marie-Jose, the caller, had seen a television program about Protestants, and she had never met one. In her search for a Protestant, she received Oyer's name and number.

After several months of Bible study, Marie-Jose became a Christian. Today she is one of the founding members of a French Mennonite congregation Oyer helped plant in Paris in September 1997.

Oyer and Janie and Neal Blough have all spent more than 20 years with MBM in France, sharing their faith with Christians and non-Christians alike. The three workers, now on North American assignment, say the French do not readily accept anything other than religious norms.

"The French are suspicious of anything that is not Catholic or Reformed," Neal Blough says. "They think we're a cult, and French don't like any group that swallows up your individual religious identity."

The Mennonite church has a long history in France, but for many years it was located only in the Alsace region on the western border with Germany—far away both geographically and socially from Paris and its suburbs. "Mennonites have the advantage of having a history," Neal says. "But it isn't a positive history according to the history books. We want to get the history books straight. Mennonites are only a footnote, but let's get the footnote right."

Oyer serves as the academic dean and professor of New Testament at the European Bible Institute. She is also on the five-member leadership team of the new 34-member congregation, which started as the merger of a small evangelical church and a group that met regularly to discuss Anabaptist issues and theology. She preaches once a month.

The Bloughs, who live and work in St. Maurice, a suburb southeast of Paris, are directors of St. Maurice Mennonite Center, which is now working on a three-pronged project concerning Mennonite theology, history and conflict resolution-mediation. The center also has an extensive library.

The center is a busy place. It is also home for the Bloughs and the meeting place for a Mennonite congregation. As the congregation, which has a 20-year history, grows in membership, it is running out of space. "If you come late to church, be prepared to wait for half an hour before you get a seat," Janie Blough says.

Seventy to 80 people attend each Sunday. The congregation hopes to construct a new building but is having difficulty getting money. The French Mennonite Conference has committed itself to help churches fund new building projects, and some money comes from North America.

In addition to their duties at the Mennonite center, the Bloughs work part-time elsewhere. Janie is an employee of the city of St. Maurice, teaching five classes of English to students between the ages of 25 and 80. She has been able to develop close relationships with many of her students and spends a lot of time on the phone with them or visiting them in their homes. Neal teaches church history and lectures on 16th-century Anabaptism at several local institutes.—*Rachel Lewis of MBM News Service*

> We want to get the history books straight. Mennonites are only a footnote, but let's get the footnote right.
>
> —*Neal Blough*

A clean start

As his father, Patrick, supervises, Gideon Dunster cleans a window at Central Christian High School and Middle School, Kidron, Ohio. The Dunsters were among 70 volunteers who helped prepare the school for the new year, which started Aug. 20. Central Christian reported a record enrollment of 349 in grades six through 12. This is the first year the school has offered a sixth grade. Central Christian is one of 12 member schools of the Mennonite Secondary Education Council.

Patterns of church life

The case for conference authority—part 1

by Gerald W. Schlabach

Authority and accountability are tricky things. Some may exercise centralized authority even as they question it. Others may be accountable even while they exercise hierarchical authority. And in every case, the most important patterns of both authority and accountability are often unseen, informal and organic.

As North American Mennonite bodies grapple with how to structure their sense of peoplehood in a newly integrated denomination, we should not be surprised that some people misunderstand and misrepresent other people's patterns of church life. An emphasis on congregational authority in the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) may seem to allow for unlimited congregational autonomy, but GC churches grant each other the authority to challenge them anyway. An emphasis on conference authority in the Mennonite Church (MC) may seem to allow for the abuse of top-down power, but MC conferences are accountable to congregations anyway.

The anomaly is modern society, which began forcing these debates [about church polity] upon North American Mennonites more than a century ago.

Though we should not be surprised at misrepresentation, neither should we settle for it. In current discussions concerning church polity—i.e., how to structure our life together as a people—the temptation is to turn those discussions into a debate between two poles: virtually complete congregational autonomy vs. nearly unassailable conferences.

Neither pattern is an anomaly that "deviates" from the other. The anomaly is modern society, which began forcing these debates upon North American Mennonites more than a century ago.

In an article in *The Mennonite* with the polarizing title "Forget the Ecclesiastical Examiners" (July 14), Robert Hartzler claimed that "the greater degree of authority vested in area conferences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in North America represents a brief deviation from the more normal practice of congregational autonomy in historical Anabaptism." An earlier article, "A Search for Faithfulness" by Tim Schrag, Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and David Brubaker (April 28), made a similar but more careful claim about the practice of disciplining entire congregations.

Breakdown of traditional patterns: Such claims rest on misunderstandings of history. The way a congregationalist polity worked prior to 1850 and the way it works now are hardly the same. Both the congregationalism associated with the GC and the conference authority associated with the MC have been responses to the breakdown of traditional patterns of authority at work in most premodern communities in history (see box on page 9).

Authority patterns in traditional cultures are difficult to name for those who have lived only in the "modern world." Mennonite Central Committee workers who have spent time in rural villages or urban neighborhoods outside North America and Europe may recognize the pattern. Scholars who have studied the Amish and Old Order Mennonites respectfully may recognize the pattern. So too may those of us who have spent many years reading texts from ancient history or from early and medieval Christianity.

These cultures simply have not assumed that the best or only way for leaders to represent the communities that they guide is through the formal procedures that modern people associate with democracy (constitutions, elections, Robert's Rules of Order, minutes, precise checks and balances). At their best, leaders in traditional cultures represent their communities in their very person, because they only emerge as leaders by accumulating the community's wisdom and embodying its values over time.

In other words, they are leaders because

Mark Pavlik

When the language of modernity equates all hierarchy with authoritarianism, it silences our ability to name the patterns of accountability that operate well and humanely in traditional communities.

they are elders, and to be elders they do not so much need to be old as to have lived the community's life well and deeply. Their word counts for more than others because it stands for much more than one person's opinion or self-interest. Yet these kinds of leaders are accountable in ways that outsiders may not see. Having emerged as leaders through deep community participation, they cannot really continue as effective ones without consultation. If they attempt to move without consensus, they will begin to encounter communal inertia. The pattern may be hierarchical, but when the language of modernity equates all hierarchy with authoritarianism, it silences our ability to name the patterns of accountability that operate well and humanely in traditional communities.

Obviously, communities and organizations in modern society cannot import or maintain premodern patterns of leadership wholesale. I do suspect that when groups are thriving, more of this organic kind of leadership is at work behind the scenes than modern culture gives us words to describe. But the very problem that all Mennonites began to face in North America, as the pace of modernization sped up in the late 19th century, is the problem of how to sustain an organic community life in the complex and trendy world that buffets them more rapidly all the time.

Cohesive community life: Different Mennonite groups have used different strategies to maintain at least a cohesive community life. Early General Conference Mennonites attempted to define their place in modern society by using its formal, rational organizational procedures to become an American denomination. The second wave of GC Mennonites who joined them from Russia brought with them another strategy, the especially pronounced ethnic identity they had shaped in colony life.

Meanwhile, the groups that became the Mennonite Church adopted modern organizational structures more slowly than GC Mennonites, but when they did so they attempted to fuse them with older, premodern patterns of authority. Strong conference authority has thus been a way to sustain patterns of cohesive community life that are especially hard to articulate and defend when modernity forces us to talk about our communities in the alien language of constitutional democracy. The hope was to continue being a people, more than simply a denomination. Paradoxically, strong conference authority was actually a way to extend those traditional patterns of peoplehood into new, modern organizational structures.

Initially this happened when those "village elders" we know better as bishops, servant-ministers and deacons took on responsibility for more congregations and played leading roles in the conferences that linked them. Even where and when bishops did not play a role, conferences conceived of themselves as congregations of congregations.

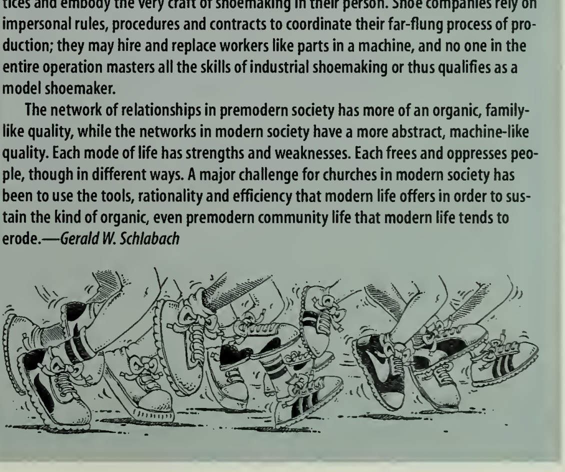
Thus it is misleading to call a strong conference polity an anomaly, a "deviation" from an otherwise steady pattern of congregationalism. In the larger scheme of things, modernity is the anomaly. All Mennonite groups have struggled to find adequate ways not only to cope with it but if possible to witness faithfully to Christ through their changing forms of community life.

Gerald W. Schlabach teaches history and religion at Bluffton (Ohio) College. This is the first of a two-part article. Part 2 will appear in next week's issue.

To sense the difference between "premodern" life and "modern" life at its sharpest, compare the ways that village shoemakers make shoes and the way a global company like Nike™ makes shoes.

Shoemakers rely on personal relationships with suppliers and customers, master every step in the process of production themselves, train new shoemakers as apprentices and embody the very craft of shoemaking in their person. Shoe companies rely on impersonal rules, procedures and contracts to coordinate their far-flung process of production; they may hire and replace workers like parts in a machine, and no one in the entire operation masters all the skills of industrial shoemaking or thus qualifies as a model shoemaker.

The network of relationships in premodern society has more of an organic, family-like quality, while the networks in modern society have a more abstract, machine-like quality. Each mode of life has strengths and weaknesses. Each frees and oppresses people, though in different ways. A major challenge for churches in modern society has been to use the tools, rationality and efficiency that modern life offers in order to sustain the kind of organic, even premodern community life that modern life tends to erode.—*Gerald W. Schlabach*



A single righteous

Biblical and theological reasons for advocacy to government—part 2

by Wilma Ann Bailey

If God and those who have gone before us in the faith are understood as modeling appropriate behavior, then all Christians should be advocates. Roy Enquist points to the apostles and prophets who critique the political realities of their day. And public worship, he writes, "has political significance since even praying for the poor or sick is an act of advocacy."

The church can choose to remain silent and thereby support the status quo, or it can work to change structures to introduce more justice into the system. *—Robert Kelly*

"Neutrality" writes William Lazareth, "is a political myth: It is simply a covert way of universally identifying with the unjust status quo." As Peter said, "We must obey God rather than human authority" (Acts 5:29) when that authority is misguided or wrong.

Robert Kelly agrees: "To say that the church ought to 'stay out of politics' is absurd. In a political society it is impossible to remain free of politics. The church can choose to remain silent and thereby support the status quo, or it can work to change structures to introduce more justice into the system." As Desmond Tutu has said, "If an elephant has his foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

Kelly notes that our society is structured in such a way that human needs are met through government agencies. Helping the poor means keeping these agencies faithful to their mission. Both Amos 5:24 and Micah 6:8 issue calls to the faithful community to do justice. Amos roars, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream," and Micah thunders, "Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God."

Dean M. Kelley rightly points out that "justice is not a trait of individuals but of larger systems, and structures, of laws, customs and people's expectations of one another."

Theodore Weber supports the role of the Christian in advocacy by simply stating, "If God works in the midst of political affairs, we must work where [God] works." He cites Jeremiah, who told King Zedekiah to surrender to the Babylonian army rather than fight (Jeremiah 38:17-18).

Roswell Barnes concurs: "According to the church's understanding of its own nature and mission, it must be involved in public affairs because it must stand for God's work in the world through Christ. ... No aspect of the life of society or the individual's experience is outside or beyond the concern of the church, which is committed to seek, interpret and do [God's] will."

A passive stance: Mennonites and many other Christians are fond of quoting Romans 13:1, 3: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities ... for rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad," and 1 Timothy 2:1-2: "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in high positions so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life," to support a passive stance before the government, but they overlook the historical context of those injunctions and the appropriate use of them.

Ulrich Mauser points out in *The Gospel of*

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Larry Penner

Peace that the author of the book of Acts has a favorable opinion of the Pax Romana. Paul has a positive view of government because he is a Roman citizen by birth with full rights and privileges in that society. It is to be expected that he suggest that no one who is good fear the governing authorities. The governing authorities are there to punish evildoers, he claims.

It is doubtful this was true in light of the fact that it was the Roman authorities who crucified Jesus, who was not an evildoer. Neither was it true in Nazi Germany. While authority and order are instituted by God according to the biblical text, not every government or individual leader is there by divine fiat.

The Christians of the New Testament time period expected the imminent return of Christ. Nothing in the world mattered because they thought the world itself would soon pass away. The church today has a different vantage point in history.

Life issues: Anabaptists have been advocates to the government on their own behalf for a number of years, particularly on the issue of the draft and other peace issues. Anabaptists have been called to this witness. Other issues that should command the attention of Anabaptists and all Christians are the issues that affect the life, health and well-being of those least able to speak up or care for themselves: the poor and needy, the widows, orphans and strangers. Scriptures like Exodus 22:21: "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt," and Leviticus 24:22: "You shall have one law for the alien and the citizen," surely have implications, for example, for current legislation that would deny health care and education to those who are not citizens.

This does not suggest there are not genuine issues that affect primarily the middle class (or that transcend socioeconomic status), but the middle class has plenty of educated, savvy and articulate people to speak for it. Christians are therefore free to put their time and resources elsewhere.

What are the potential pitfalls of Christian involvement in advocacy? The same ones Christians face every day as they try to remain faithful to God in a fallen world.

What might be unique about the Anabaptist style of advocacy? To be consistent with their rejection of violent means Anabaptists should never attack or demean a person. Anabaptists should be about building community and relationships. Furthermore, as John Howard Yoder has written, Anabaptists as Christians approach people in government, not the government as an abstraction or structure. I agree. All people are bearers of the image of God, even politicians, and they should be treated as carriers of that image.

Unlike Yoder, however, I believe it is necessary to begin with particular issues and seek particular actions or results. Let the issue initiate the conversation. In fact, we should repeat to ourselves the mantra, "It's the issue, stupid." Our government works with legislation, not abstractions. It does not help to tell the government that Christians are for peace, love and happiness for all.

Yoder also wrote that such formal means of advocacy as "petitions, letters or visits to executive officers of the government" along with voting are ineffective. He said the most effective witness is the demonstration of the love Christians have for one another.

I wish I could agree with this, but I cannot. People who are not Christians love each other. While one hopes the church models love in action within its community, it is not specific enough to provide direction to the government. Christians have to do the hard work of learning about issues and thinking about solutions.

I, too, am often pessimistic about the efficacy of letters, petitions and voting. Voting particularly seems to stem from the wrong ideological base. It seeks the will of the majority. The question it answers is not what is right but what most people want. But the will of the majority is not always right. The Mennonite church on the congregational level has usually tried to work by consensus rather than voting. Seeking consensus among 250 million people is obviously impractical. Further, even if 249,999,999 people agree, that still does not make a thing right, particularly from a Christian standpoint.

Fortunately, people do not agree on many issues, and this can be helpful if channeled into discussion that facilitates fleshing out an issue with its inferences and implications. Nevertheless, I am unwilling to give up on the process, including voting, letters and petitions, until a better one is found. A still small voice can accomplish great things.

1 Corinthians 5:6 says, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." An ad in the *New York Times* (March 31, 1996) taken out by a segment of the Lubavitcher Jewish community reads in part, "Our world is like a scale. A single righteous act can tip the balance and make all the difference."

What should command the attention of Anabaptists and all Christians are the issues that affect the life, health and well-being of those least able to speak up or care for themselves: the poor and needy, the widows, orphans and strangers.

Wilma Ann Bailey teaches Old Testament at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., and is a member of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. board and executive committee. This is the second of a two-part series based on a talk she gave at the 1996 MCC Washington Office Spring Seminar.

Correction: The Gap, Pa., relief sale was held biennially until 1989, when the board decided to hold it annually. The schedule was incorrect in the Aug. 25 *The Mennonite.*

Panamanian Mennonite slain by guerrillas

AKRON, Pa.—A Panamanian Mennonite was killed in his home Aug. 26 by guerrillas from across the border in Colombia. Alber Chocho from the village of Darien was shot five times in the early morning attack. One son was also injured but is now recovering after having a bullet removed from his foot.

Guerrilla groups are reported to be robbing rural Panamanians to support their fight against the Colombian government.

Chocho was a member of the United Evangelical Church, a Mennonite Brethren group. The funeral was held Aug. 28.—*MCC and MBMS International news services*

Missionaries kidnapped, released

CAROL STREAM, Ill.—Four missionaries with the Mennonite-affiliated Nueva Vida in Guatemala were released unharmed just hours after being abducted June 29. The kidnappers, who demanded $334,000 in ransom, released Barbara Stoltzfus; her daughter, Anita Cosigua; Jenny Glick, a short-term volunteer from Oley, Pa.; and Otto Dueck from Belize. The kidnappers escaped during a shoot-out with police.

Stoltzfus and her husband, Elam, have served in Guatemala since 1972. They are originally from Pennsylvania.—*Christianity Today*

MCC U.S. delegation visits Cuba

AKRON, Pa.—A 10-member Mennonite Central Committee U.S. delegation returned Sept. 7 after an eight-day trip to Cuba. The group visited Mennonite and Brethren in Christ house churches, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Havana and the Cuban Council of Churches.

The group included five members of the MCC U.S. executive committee. Another delegation member, Willroy Grant, stayed in Cuba as an MCC intern. He is a Costa Rican studying in the conflict transformation program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

"The MCC U.S. executive committee recognizes that U.S. policies are a big part of the problem in Cuba," says Linda Shelly, director of MCC's Latin America and Caribbean programs. "They want to understand firsthand the reality of life in Cuba and how people are affected by U.S. policies."

Delegation members will spend a day in Washington to report their findings.—*MCC News Service*

EMU observes Latino Heritage Month

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, is celebrating Latino Heritage Month with guest speakers, art exhibits and feature films through September and into October.

Paintings by Colombian artist Felix Angel are on display in the Hartzler Library art gallery. A workshop on "Internalized Oppression" will be led by Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, director of peace and justice ministries for Mennonite Central Committee U.S. She will also speak on being a Mexican-American.

Writer, editor dies at age 91

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Elizabeth A. Showalter, a longtime curriculum writer and editor, died Aug. 30 at a Harrisonburg nursing home. She was 91.

She worked at Mennonite Publishing House in the 1940s and '50s, writing Bible school and Sunday school curricula and editing *Words of Cheer*, the predecessor to the children's magazine *On the Line.*

Hesston College names alumni director

HESSTON, Kan.—Dallas Stutzman has been named director of alumni relations and special events at Hesston College. A 1976 Hesston graduate, he had been an admissions counselor at the school since 1991. Stutzman will continue as director of church relations, a position he has held since 1995.

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Events

Lyndon Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., 50th anniversary, Sept. 20. Speaker: Linford Stutzman.

"How to Be a Good Church Leader" retreat, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Sept. 25-27. Leaders: Dennis Gingerich and Ed Bontrager. Contact: 800-839-1021.

Workers

Ewert, Angela and Bret Rempel, Markham, Ill., are beginning two-year Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignments in Cartwright, Labrador, in community development.

Gisel, Claire, Archbold, Ohio, is beginning a three-year MCC assignment in New Orleans as a children's program assistant.

Schlabach, Rachelle, Millersburg, Ohio, is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Washington as a legislative assistant in the MCC U.S. Washington Office.

Schmidt, Rachel, Goessel, Kan., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Toronto working in peace and mediation.

Wilson, Beverly, Lancaster, Pa., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Akron, Pa., as a purchasing assistant for Ten Thousand Villages.

Births

Blank, Annalise Marie, Aug. 17, to Bryan and Carolyn Blank, Christiana, Pa.

Eagan, Allison Renee, Aug. 19, to Renee and Richard Eagan, Nappanee, Ind.

Ester-Bode, Kealy Isabella, Aug. 25, to Michelle (Brenneman) and Ulf Ester-Bode, Indianapolis.

Fannin, Alexander Harrell, Aug. 20, to Joann (Harrell) and Tim Fannin, Newport News, Va.

Graber, Natalie Brenneman, Aug. 13, to Galen and Ruth (Brenneman) Graber, Goshen, Ind.

Jans, Benjamin Steiner, July 21, to Brian and Lori (Steiner) Jans, Dayton, Ohio.

Jones, Saoirse Aideen, June 5, to Anita (Brubaker) and Kim Jones, Edmonton.

Lehman, Kourtney Marie, Aug. 17, to Nanette (Phillips) and Tracy Lehman, Nampa, Idaho.

Mann, Carly Elise, July 19, to Carrie and Mark Mann, Evansville, Ind.

Meyer-Reed, Conrad Jacob, Aug. 14 to Barb and Lane Meyer-Reed, Minneapolis.

Ulrich, Kevin Wayne, Aug. 1, to Duane and Loretta (Zehr Steury) Ulrich, Roanoke, Ill.

Zeiger, Rachael Olivia, Aug. 21, to Terri (Sells) and Todd Zeiger, South Bend, Ind.

Marriages

Allison/Birky: Clay Allison, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Lisa Birky, Colorado Springs, Aug. 1, by Merv Birky.

Beidler/Spory: Lyle Beidler, Leola, Pa., and Melissa Spory, Boswell, Pa., Aug. 1, by Doug Kaufman.

Benson/Crilow: Travis Benson, Willmar, Minn., and Kelly Crilow, Nappanee, Ind., Aug. 22, by Wesley Bontreger.

Borntrager/Shellenberger: Crystal Borntrager, Humboldt, Ill., and Jon Shellenberger, Paoli, Ind., Aug. 8, by Marilyn Miller.

Byer/Esbenshade: Lorelei Byer, Salem, Ohio, and Wendell Esbenshade, New Holland, Pa., Aug. 8, by Adam Esbenshade.

Christner/Jackson: Derek Christner, Middletown, Ohio, and Ruth Ann Jackson, Monmouth Junction, N.J., Aug. 1, by Daniel Brown.

Crisman/Dirks: Andrew Crisman, Hopewell Junction, N.Y., and Danielle Dirks, Newton, Kan., July 11, by Victor Austin and Steve and Susan Ortman Goering.

Epp/Hopper: Marc Epp, Newton, Kan., and Brandi Hopper, Brownwood, Texas, June 13, by Jack Ruth.

Flickinger/Juhnke: Carol Flickinger, Newton, Kan., and Roger Juhnke, Newton, Aug. 1, by Norma Johnson and Tim Schrag.

Forry/Hurst: Timothy Forry, Manheim, Pa., and Maria Hurst, Lititz, Pa., Aug. 1, by George Hurst.

Freeburne/Ledford: Chris Freeburne, Aberdeen, Idaho, and Rebecca Ledford, Aberdeen, Aug. 8, by Lynn Lloyd.

Garboden/Koontz: Andrew Garboden, Goshen, Ind., and Melissa Koontz, Goshen, Aug. 15, by Richard Litwiller.

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Gering/Schrag: Gretchen Gering, Ritzville, Wash., and Eric Schrag, Newton, Kan., Aug. 15, by Ralph Lind.

Graber/Peters: Jennifer Graber, Reedley, Calif., and Matthew Peters, Reedley, Aug. 1, by Ken Seitz.

Johnson/Poteet: Rhonda Johnson, Williamsburg, Va., and John Poteet Jr., Olney, Md., July 25, by Kenneth Stevanus.

Kennell/Scharf: Bruce Kennell, Eureka, Ill., and Becky Scharf, Deer Creek, Ill., Aug. 15, by Rick Troyer.

Kephart/Troyer: Dale Kephart, Indianapolis, and Rebecca Troyer, Indianapolis, Aug. 22, by Ryan Ahlgrim.

Lehman/McFalls: Dwight Lehman, Manheim, Pa., and Christine McFalls, Manheim, July 4, by George Hurst.

Miller/Showalter: Matthew Miller, Elkhart, Ind., and Karen Showalter, Indianapolis, Aug. 15, by Nina Lanctot.

Obenour/Souder: Nancy Obenour and Jere Souder, Goshen, Ind., June 20.

Deaths

Birkey, Melvin, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 20. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Elizabeth Herring, Jane Otto, John; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 24 at Goshen by Galen Johns, Marvin Yoder and Martha Kolb-Wyckoff.

Friesen, Emma Blosser, 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 20. Survivors: husband, Bernhard; children Lyle, Louise Koehn, Loraine Riegsecker, Loretta Ryan; 19 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 23 at Pettisville, Ohio, by James Roynon, David Ryan and Charles Gautsche.

Hartzler, Raymond, 76, Belleville, Pa., died Aug 1. Survivor: wife, Sara. Burial: Aug. 3 at Belleville by Max Zook and Robert Hartzler.

Hege, Herbert Jacob, 98, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Aug. 6. Survivors: wife, Hazel; children Arlis Mueller, Eugene, Richard, Robert, Paul; 14 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 10 at Aberdeen by Monty Ledford.

Kready, Martin, 65, Manheim, Pa., died Aug. 18 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Ruth; children Doris Martin, Joann Herr, Linda Hanna, Gerry, Jay; nine grandchildren; parents, Norman and Elva Kready. Burial: Aug. 22 at Manheim by Andrew Miller, Norman Shenk, Howard Witmer and Jason Denlinger.

Nice, Raymond, 80, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 26 of pancreatitis. Survivors: wife, Ella; children Glenn, Donald; foster son, David Cressman; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 29 at Souderton by David Greiser and Gerald Clemmer.

Peters, Benjamin, 71, Manheim, Pa., died Aug. 8. Survivors: wife, Verna; children Clyde, Mark, Elaine, Janice Gerhart; six grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 12 at Manheim by Donald Nauman, Jay Peters and George Hurst.

Strickler, Vera Herr, 100, Lancaster, Pa., died Aug. 23. Survivors: son, Hiram; three grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 28 at Salunga, Pa., by Sam Thomas.

Classifieds

Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program of San Diego seeks full-time ***volunteer director***—to grow into fully compensated position. Great opportunity to bring together efforts of government, church and community. Pearl Hartz, 619-298-1941 (eve.)

West Fallowfield Christian School has an opening for a part-time ***librarian.*** Training and experience preferred. Interested people should contact Kay Predmore, interim principal, West Fallowfield Christian School, 610-593-5011; fax 610-593-6041.

Heartland International Inc., is interviewing for ***independent Conklin Company marketing representatives*** in Nebraska, Kansas Missouri, Pennsylvania and Iowa. Opportunity for promotion into sales management. Excellent commissions. We train. Agricultural or construction experience a plus.

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Mennonite Board of Missions, Mennonite Media department seeks half-time ***video-Internet producer*** who will function in a work team environment. Video producer experience and an understanding of Mennonite-Anabaptist beliefs and practices required. Available to travel. Position open immediately. Resumes accepted until Sept. 30, 1998.

Send resume to Erma Brunk, 1251 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-574-4872; email erma@mennomedia.org.

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Send resume to Lanny Millette at Camp Hebron, 957 Camp Hebron Rd., Halifax, PA 17032; email hebron@camphebron.org.

Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church invites applications and resumes for a full-time ***leading minister.*** We are a General Conference congregation of some 500 members, situated 1 1/4 hour south of Winnipeg. Qualifications: Should show strength in team leadership, knowledge in Anabaptist foundations, and familiarity in Old and New Testament studies. This person should possess motivation, vision for both ministerial team and congregation, and skill in communications—speaking, listening and facilitating.

Contact: Search Committee, c/o Peter Hildebrand, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; 204-324-8317; email aaront@mb.sympatico.ca.

rites of passage

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getting that first apartment
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by Omar Eby

Caves of silence in the city

God is in the citadels.—Psalm 48:3

Because I am a farm boy with the thick blood of Mennonite peasantry in my veins, I am not happy in the city. One summer's four-day visit to New York confirmed that. I enjoyed the theaters, the concerts, art museums and ethnic restaurants of the city—but little else. I did not know where to find God in all that noise. I could not say with the Psalmist, "God is in the citadels"—the economic, capitalistic fortress of America.

Yet on Sunday morning at Riverside Church, among 800 people, I almost imagined God was present for one still moment during worship. I don't know what I would do to find God in an American citadel if I lived in the city. Join Dorothy Day, become poor and search for Jesus among the dispossessed or remain middle-class and worship in a cathedral (at the risk of its being mere aesthetics)?

But just now I am remembering Thomas Merton's words in his book *New Seeds of Contemplation*: "City churches are sometimes quiet and peaceful solitudes, caves of silence where a [person] can seek refuge from the intolerable arrogance of the business world. One can be more alone, sometimes, in church than in a room in one's own house. ... In these quiet churches one remains nameless, undisturbed in the shadows. ... The very tastelessness and shabbiness of some churches make them greater solitudes. ... Let there always be quiet, dark churches in which [people] can take refuge. Places where they can kneel in silence. Houses of God, filled with [God's] silent presence."

O God, because you dwell in the city, even that terrible economic citadel of America where only Mammon is worshiped, may my children there keep finding Thee, God of the Eternal City. Amen.

The fire of self-knowledge

Create in me a pure heart, O God.
—Psalm 51:10

This psalm is alleged to have been written by David when the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. The psalm contains some of the best metaphors for confession and cleansing—and some of the most quoted verses.

I fear the consequences of such praying. Purity conjures images of refinement. I see the fires of the Kitwe, Zambia, copper mines. The monstrous dump trucks, so massive each wheel has its separate motor-device. Tires twice the height of the driver. Rocks, at least 5 to 7 percent copper bearing, dumped into a crusher, pulverized, washed, cooked, heated until they become liquid. Then the tiny, tiny thread of copper poured into a shallow pan. And all the rest dumped as useless slag. Or a lime kiln with its fire; or crude petroleum boiled to get a refined grade of super oil. Do I want that kind of divine attention? I do not even ask, Do I need that kind of purifying? How different would be my behavior, my work, my language, my thought, my worship, if they were of pure motive?

I read of King David's life and wonder if his descendants knew his life's history when they declared him a man of God. The wars, the women, the palace intrigue—where was the pure motive?

O God, may my motives for writing be purified—only to the degree that you give grace to endure the fire of self-knowledge. Amen.

Omar Eby teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. His column appears about once each month.

How different would be my behavior, my work, my language, my thought, my worship, if they were of pure motive?

Resources for faith

***Building Communities of Compassion: Mennonite Mutual Aid in Theory and Practice*, edited by Willard M. Swartley and Donald B. Kraybill (Herald Press, 1998, $14.99 U.S., $21.50 Cdn.), offers the first sustained and scholarly assessment of the history, theology and practice of Mennonite mutual aid.**

***Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life* by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat (Touchstone, 1998, $15) includes more than 650 excerpts from various writers on the spirituality of everyday experiences. This is the trade paperback edition of the 1996 hardback.**

Two new books from The Alban Institute are *Do I Belong in Seminary?* by Ronald E. Parker ($10.95) and *The Once and Future Pastor: The Changing Role of Religious Leaders* by William Chris Hobgood ($14.25).

***The Mennonites in Essex and Kent Counties, Ontario: An Introduction*, edited by Victor Kliewer (Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association, 1997, $15 Cdn.), is a comprehensive survey of Mennonites in these two counties in southwestern Ontario.**

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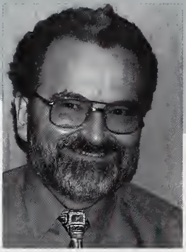

J. Lorne Peachey

Pardon our iniquity and our sin

Sin is in the news a lot these days. Not that it's called sin. In reporting on the latest developments in the personal life of the U.S. president, journalists are more inclined to use words like indiscretions, assignations, or misjudgments. Yet if Bill Clinton has done what more and more reports indicate he has done, we who are part of the Christian church—to which Clinton also belongs—need to call his past behavior what it is: sin.

That's relatively easy to do. Clinton is, after all, far removed from us, and from a distance we can readily identify and classify his actions. Because he is a public figure, we also find it easy to make the latest revelations a game: to joke about them, to wonder what sort of power brokering is going on, to become cynical that the latest "confession" is another political move.

I also find that concentrating on the sins of President Clinton—and of others—takes the spotlight off where it needs to be: on me. "My sin is ever before me," I read in Psalm 51:3. Like the psalmist, I too must give my primary attention to what in my life needs forgiving and correcting. Not to do so is also a sin.

Concentrating on the sins of others takes the spotlight off where it needs to be: on me.

Now it's quite easy for me to say that, in relation to a perfect God, I'm not perfect. What's a great deal more difficult is to admit that I am sinful, that Paul's list of sins in Romans 1 or 1 Corinthians 5 actually contains some to which I must plead guilty.

I know that because my stomach knots when I read them or when I hear them mentioned in sermons. I know it because my thoughts flit to these sins during confession time in a worship service. I know it because, try hard as I would to argue that I am different from the people Paul condemns, honesty in the middle of some sleepless night makes me admit that these too are my temptations and my sins.

It is then that I go to God with confession. Not with some generic prayer: "I'm sorry for my sins; please forgive me." No, I must name my sins: by time, by place, by circumstance, by person.

Confessions like this to God should be a way of life for the Christian, something I do every day as I confront my sins. But this can also be an easy way out, thinking that by simply confessing to God I have taken care of sin. Even President Clinton has said—if my Sunday paper can be believed—that asking for forgiveness has become such a habit it is "in my bones." To keep a cycle of sinning and confessing from being a habitual part of my life, I must take an additional step.

That step is to confess to another, someone who is an ambassador of God for me. It may be my pastor, my spouse, a spiritual companion, someone I trust and admire. That person hears my confession to God. They also help me think through what restitution I need to make, to whom I need to go with more confession, how I will be accountable for my temptations in this area in the future.

By this time, dealing with my sin has become much more difficult than simply saying, "I'm sorry." The next step is even harder. It is to confront the attitudes, the mind-set, the fantasies, the pride and the idolatry that lead to acts of sin in the first place. But these too I must give to God—and to others—or the sin will continue its grip on me.

When I have taken these steps to deal with my sin, I find that I am humbled. I am less prone to be judgmental of others, the temptations they struggle with, the sins they commit. I am also much less inclined to make jokes or smug comments about sin, even when that sin is highly public or being used for political advantage or power brokerage.

Instead, I understand just a bit better how Moses must have felt as he constantly confronted the sins of his people in the wilderness. Instead of always standing against them, judging them, he identified with them and their sin. Bowing before the Lord God Jehovah, Moses prayed for himself and his people: "Although this is a stiff-necked people, pardon *our* iniquity and *our* sin [italics mine], and take us for your inheritance" (Exodus 34:9b). May this be *our* prayer in this day of more and more revelations of sin.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

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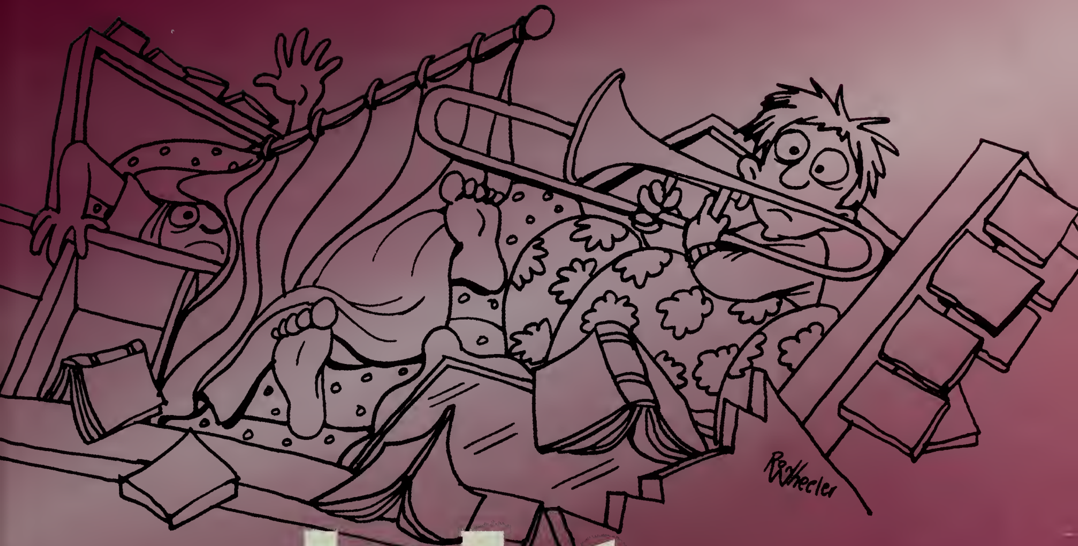

the right way to blow

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6 Softball tournament scores $3,000 for MCC
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12 What conference authority is all about

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Guilty of gullibility?

The article about Johann Dueck ("Canadians Asked to Help Alleged Nazi Collaborator," Sept. 1) brought back memories of my visit to Moscow in the winter of 1981-82 when I was there for research. I met a Mennonite, working with the Baptists, whose mother had been accused of collaboration with the Nazis. When World War II started, she was living on a farm in the Ukraine, alone after her husband had not returned from a meeting at the local police headquarters.

When the Nazis invaded, they promised her a similar farm closer to Germany and therefore safer from the communists. She accepted since the Nazis seemed clearly the lesser evil when compared with the communists, all the more since she could talk with them in her own language, German. Unbeknown to her, the farm where she went was in Polish territory from where all Poles had been removed so that the area could be settled by Germans and become "echt Deutsch." This participation in ethnic cleansing classified her as a collaborator in the eyes of the Soviet government, who lured her back after World War II with false promises that her husband was waiting for her at her farm, and then punished her.

I don't know what specific crimes Johann Dueck has been accused of, but I am certain that there is a strong possibility that he, too, is guilty only of being gullible and believing the Nazis unquestioningly. I have heard similar stories about other Mennonites being too eager to believe the Nazis, and who can blame them? Experience had taught them that the Soviet authorities could not be trusted. But they had no experiences with the Nazis, so why not trust them, especially since they could communicate in their mother tongue? I urge that Johann Dueck be given the benefit of the doubt and that we support him, financially and morally, until his collaboration charges become specific.—*Bert Beynen, Des Moines, Iowa*

Editors note: Dueck was a translator for the Nazis in the Ukraine during World War II, according to Canadian Mennonite.

Healthy skepticism of the world

I was fascinated by the stimulating articles in the Sept. 1 issue that talked about our interaction with the world: Gordon Houser's Mediaculture column reminded me of the "verboten" worldly "amusements" our church regulations used to shield us from. They can give you a let-down feeling. Rich Preheim's editorial pointed out the extreme separation of the Amish and how irregularities in conduct become so conspicuous while many of us can easily blend in. "Computer Lies" by Joey Earl Horstman told us of another place we can be pulled in even as I enjoyed the convenience of sending this letter by email. Jim Amstutz underscored the kingdom values of caring for the powerless in "Widows and Widowers in our Midst."

But the experience of the church in "Weathering Indonesia's storm" defines a point of differentiation we Mennonites in the West know little about despite our history of being persecuted. The Indonesian Mennonites know a greater intensity of feeling when they pray, "Do not put us to the test but deliver us from the evil one." Sports teams undergo rigorous conditioning for their games. Are there areas of conditioning we need for the tough times, or shall we simply blend in and trust God will provide if and when those times come?

Keep challenging us to maintain a healthy skepticism of societal influences that can shape us adversely.—*Chester Kurtz, Lancaster, Pa.*

Trinitarianism and truth

Apparently all the hype concerning the merger of our two denominations into one has blurred our understanding of unity. I am not sure where the idea came from that we are in the business of merging "the three great monotheistic religions," which Jerry C. Stanaway suggests (Readers Say, Sept. 1). Being "open-minded about Jesus" doesn't negate the truth about the Messiah. The reason they are Muslims and we are Christians is because we (I) believe the truth about Jesus the Messiah and they do not. Giving up this truth doesn't make them more like us, it makes us more like them—wrong.

Obviously this is one type of unity: a unity centered not upon Jesus, Scripture, community or, if we are honest, even love. Instead, this is a unity based upon the false assumption that one can know God without knowing, seeing or believing Jesus Christ. It seems to me that this attitude is more concerned with being effective rather than being faithful.

Putting our faith in context is absolutely necessary in our postmodern culture. But stripping it of its truth, dusting it off and then dressing it with flowers to make it look pretty does us, especially Jesus our Lord, a huge disservice and is ultimately effective in nothing but making us just like the world. Let us as a new, merged denomination remain faithful,

the Mennonite

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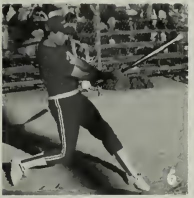

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998— by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

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Cover illustration
by Ron Wheeler

s say readers say

even if it means we are a bit ineffective at times. For me, this means embracing, not abandoning, Trinitarianism.—*Marty Troyer, Lebanon, Ore.*

The freeing process of forgiveness

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, he forgives our past. So we are faced with the choice to forgive as we have been forgiven by Christ. Forgiveness is a freeing process—being freed from a wrong nature to being a partaker of the divine nature. When we don't forgive, that freeing process stops.—*Willard Becker, Freeman, S.D.*

Brilliant irritation

The Aug. 25 editorial, "An Action Plan for Enemies" is brilliant. It's irritating, too. It captures with words what the Spirit has been trying to embed in my heart. It also reminds me of what Will Rogers once said: "The way to get rid of your enemy is to make him your friend." Identifying enemies as people who challenge my beliefs and practices is right on. Loving enemies with genuine hospitality is not easy but surely is the heart of the gospel—*John Otto, South Hutchinson, Kan.*

Materialism's trap

I'm confused by Lynn Miller's message on teaching children to save and tithe ("The Bank of Mom," Aug. 25). He seems to say that we should teach children to give out of gratitude to God. But what was he saying about saving and earning interest, neither of which are biblical values? Do we want to get our values from Dave Owens? If we pay our children for doing chores, don't we fall headlong into the trap of our society's materialistic values and teach our children the same?—*Sally Leinbach, Paoli, Ind.*

Debating homosexuality debates

I would like to share my thoughts as an Indonesian Mennonite in regards to homosexuality. Being educated in the United States, one is taught that the hallmark of U.S. society is openness. With the limited information about what goes on in conference debates, there does not seem to be any openness at all. As an outsider, I feel that what U.S. society means by openness is to express one's opinions. Expressing one's opinions is good, but it seems that in the conference debates, expressing opinions has been taken to the extreme: talking over each other. What happened to listening, then expressing one's opinion?

In Indonesia, the Chinese and the Javanese have always had a history of misconceptions about each other. But when people confuse the Chinese institution with the people it represents, human beings have suddenly lost their humanity, objectified as if they are not living and breathing. This breeds more hate, stereotypes, prejudice, suspicions.

Maybe if we start listening to each other, we might see each other's humanity in the quagmire of issues. I do not understand the whole issue of homosexuality. The recent disciplinary actions by conferences, however, does not set well with "minorities" in the wider Mennonite church. As a minority, I then began to wonder whether my existence in the Mennonite church in the United States was acceptable. Or was it that the church just tolerated those differences that exist within me? Tolerance is such an intolerable word.—*Matius Larson Krisetya, Mandeville, Jamaica*

I wonder about people (Readers Say, Aug. 11) who challenge others to study Scripture but seem to miss the main point themselves. From a 50-year perspective, I see the sin of Sodom as attempted gang rape of two male angels. If two female angels had been the intended victims, would we conclude the evil of the city was not as bad, or campaign to make sex illegal between men and women?

Rape is a crime of violence. Those of us who love and want to protect our children can't imagine a more frightening situation than Genesis 19:8, where Lot offered his daughters to the mob. I suspect gay people, too, would quickly flee an evil city like Sodom.

The letter writer expresses a need to "take a stand against homosexuality," a subject which "needs to be addressed" so God won't "hold us accountable for our lack of standards." Where is the Scripture which would exempt the Master Teacher from this assumed judgment but hold current church leaders to slogans which Jesus somehow managed not to stress with the emotional fervor we use today? —*Glenn R. Cordell, McConnellsburg, Pa.*

I am, with many others, deeply troubled that acceptance of sexual deviancy continues to plague the Mennonite churches. "Ekklesia," in the New Testament, refers to the church as being called out from the world. It is to have a new identity and a new culture, different from a decadent world culture. I pray that the apostle Paul's teachings on deviancy in 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 and other sacred Scriptures may be heard, and that believers will be purified to walk in the way, the truth and the life to the praise and glory of Christ, who paid the supreme sacrifice to make atonement for our sins.—*Lee H. Kanagy, Belleville, Pa.*

More meat, more Scripture

I just received the Sept. 1 issue, and I find that a reader's letter articulates the feeling I've been having—that *The Mennonite* is less substantial, more lightweight than *Gospel Herald.* I compared the current issue (which seems typical) with a couple of back issues of *Gospel Herald*: They both have roughly four pages of news, a page or two of letters and an editorial, and they both have two feature articles, but those articles cover six pages in *Gospel Herald* rather than the four in *The Mennonite.* This coincides with my feeling that the features are less in-depth than they used to be. I admit that I never saw the old *The Mennonite,* and I realize the delicate job balancing the expectations of two different communities. In fact, I still admire the skillful presentation of viewpoints and events that takes place every week, and I think the transition to *The Mennonite* has been very well managed. I just sometimes wish there was a little more meat in each issue. —*Rodney Yoder, New Haven, Conn.*

I would like to see *The Mennonite* return to a format of Scripture-based, thought-provoking articles as was *Gospel Herald.* From what I have seen so far in *The Mennonite,* it has consistently been a news magazine. Is this what readers prefer? I, for one, do not.—*Shari Nyles, Fleetwood, Pa.*

What about others?

Re "Identity, Complacency and Making Headlines in This World" (Editorial, Sept. 1): I used to get a little upset in my travels because when a Mennonite did something, people would make a fuss. I would ask, What about a Lutheran who does the same? People usually didn't know what to say.—*Carroll K. Walter, Quakertown, Pa.*

Mid-course corrections urged for merger

Churches in 'wilderness,' consultant tells meeting

GCMC photo by Dave Linscheid

Mennonite Publishing House president Robert Ramer (left) makes a point while Mennonite Church General Board member Conrado Hinojosa looks on during roundtable discussions at the Aug. 31-Sept. 4 integration meeting in Sioux Falls, S.D.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D.—The vision thing, as George Bush might call it, has surfaced again as the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) wind their way through the integration process.

As a "mid-course correction," a group of staff and leaders from the three bodies has called for a "clear strategic intent and vision for the new church"—the development and articulation of the reasons for integrating and a business plan for the future. The informal recommendations will go to the GC, MC and CMC general boards, which will meet jointly in November.

The group has also called for the creation of a new team, including full-time staff, to direct the integration process.

The proposals emerged in response to a study by the Center for Parish Development, a Chicago-based church consulting organization hired by the GC and MC general boards. CPD staff presented their findings at a meeting of 88 GC, MC and CMC administrators, other staff, moderators, general board members and integration-related committee members who gathered in Sioux Falls Aug. 31-Sept. 4 to discuss the integration process.

At the meeting, CPD staff member Paul Dietterich drew upon biblical imagery to describe the process: "You people have left Egypt and are in the wilderness."

Meeting participants spent much of their time wrestling with problem areas in the integration process identified by CPD. Among them was a lack of vision or "a compelling, motivating and widely shared strategic intent."

Calls for mission or vision statements have been heard throughout the integration process. Most recently, the Integration Committee in January rejected a proposal from church staff to delay by one year the scheduled 1999 delegate vote on a new integrated general board and delegate assembly in order to work on vision. Some people claimed that much vision work had already been done, such as in writing the Vision: Healing and Hope statement and the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. The Integration Committee has also worked on a merger mission statement.

But those documents, says MC moderator Dwight McFadden, do not offer "clear enough direction and clear enough rationale why we're moving in a certain direction."

GC General Board member Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower says vision for integration has been overshadowed by structural issues. "If we focus on vision and come together around that, the structural questions will fall into place," she says.

CPD staff found other significant integration problems. Citing "shifting centers of authority," their report noted that it was unclear who was in charge of the process. Responsibilities have rested with the Integration Committee, general boards, staff and ad hoc committees. Furthermore, staff working on the future church are also responsible for managing the current bodies.

The call for a new integration leadership, MC General Board member Miriam Martin says, is the result of "a clearer understanding of how difficult a job we have given ourselves."

Other problems identified by CPD include not using the "wisdom, insights and experience" of other Mennonite agency people and "a lack of appreciation for the significant differences" among the three integrating bodies, including history, polity and expectations.

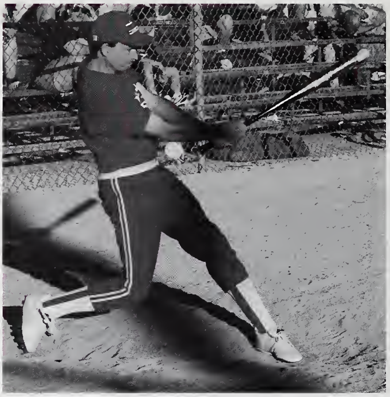
CPD also cited areas of agreement among the groups, including creative leaders and staff, strong financial positions, stable memberships and high energy for integration.

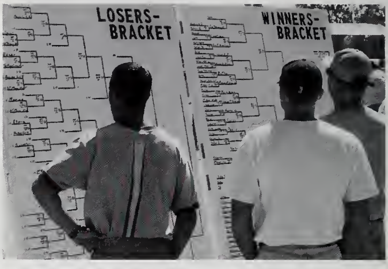
"I came to see anew the opportunities that integration or reorientation has for us," says Abe Bergen, GC director of youth ministry. "This experience makes me hopeful that we will become a vibrant, growing church."—*Rich Preheim with GCMC News Service*

Sioux Falls meeting's two "mid-course corrections":
- "Recast the integration process as reorientation, with clear strategic intent and vision for the new church, including a new name for the process";
- "Create a new process management team involving full-time staff."

Center for Parish Development's four integration-process problems:
- "A lack of appreciation for the significant differences" among the three merging groups;
- Lack of "compelling, motivating and widely shared strategic intent [vision]";
- "Shifting centers of authority";
- Not using the "wisdom, insights and experience" of other church staff.

Kevin Penner (2)





Left: Jeff Mowery from North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., cracks a single up the middle during the 21st annual Indiana Mennonite slo-pitch softball tournament in Fort Wayne Sept. 5-7. Top: Results of the double-elimination tournament were kept on big boards at the park. The tournament drew 60 men's and 16 women's teams.

Germans observe Conrad Grebel birth

The Mennonite Brethren of Bielefeld, Germany, earlier this year organized a conference to celebrate the 500th birthday of Conrad Grebel. Most of the congregation is "Aussiedler," immigrants from the former Soviet Union. But registered for the conference were about 80 people from a variety of Mennonite backgrounds.

Conference participants used the occasion to ask themselves some hard questions about tradition and modern discipleship. Themes such as relations with the state, taking oaths and nonviolence were addressed. —*Courier*

Tournament scores $3,000 for MCC

FORT WAYNE, Ind.—Two church softball teams and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) emerged victorious from an annual tournament in Fort Wayne over Labor Day weekend.

The 21st annual Indiana Mennonite Slo-Pitch Tournament drew 60 men's and 16 women's teams. When the last outs had been made, Bethany Conservative Mennonite Church No. 3 from Hartville, Ohio, had defeated Palm Grove Mennonite Church from Sarasota, Fla., for the men's championship, and Mennonite Christian Assembly from Fredericksburg, Ohio, had outscored Yellow Creek Mennonite Church B from Goshen, Ind., for the women's title.

More importantly, more than $3,000 was raised for MCC.

Teams came from Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Ohio and Pennsylvania for the double-elimination tournament, held Sept. 5-7. Saturday's games drew a crowd estimated at 3,000 to 4,000 people. Awards were given for most hits and home runs, and a worship service was held Sunday morning on the field before the day's games.

Service Adventure continues record trend

ELKHART, Ind.—For the third consecutive year, Service Adventure has reported new records for number of participants and units.

The young-adult service program of the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) started its 10th year last month with 66 people, up 27 percent from last year. Three new units—Albuquerque, N.M.; Johnstown, Pa.; and Lethbridge, Alta.—were added for this year, bringing the total number of units to 10. Lethbridge is the first Service Adventure unit in Canada. Twelve Canadian young people are participating in Service Adventure this year, double the number last year.

"I feel incredibly optimistic about this Service Adventure year, more than any other," says Phil Waite, MBM's Service Adventure coordinator.

But his optimism comes not just from the numbers. "I feel God is at work in this program," Waite says.

He led an August retreat in Albany, Ore., for new and returning unit leaders. "Everyone came away from that with a profound sense of call and a commitment to work with young adults," Waite says.

In addition to the three new units, Service Adventure operates units in Albany, Ore.; Anchorage, Alaska; Champaign, Ill.; Norristown, Pa.; Philippi, W.Va.; Raleigh, N.C.; and South Bend, Ind.

Service Adventure provides post-high school young adults with short-term assignments. They live in a household with other young adults and serve as volunteers with community service organizations. The program was started by MBM in 1989 with 17 participants in three units.—*GCMC and MBM news services*

MCC-assisted loan program in Ukraine aims to help businesses, churches grow

ZAPOROZHYE, Ukraine — In a dark and damp cellar, Alexander and Marina Sobko have buried treasure.

It's not that the Sobkos have anything particular to hide. But after some research and study, they discovered that their cellar, if properly ventilated, would be the perfect place for raising mushrooms. The Sobkos hope to make a livelihood out of mushroom farming.

So do local church leaders. They have already loaned the couple $1,500 toward the purchase of a van to improve their distribution. The loan came from the Small Business Development Fund, a business loan program operated by the Zaporozhye Evangelical Christian/Baptist churches with $10,000 in seed money from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

"We need assistance in two main categories," says Pavel Metlenko, superintendent of the Zaporozhye area churches. "First, we need development of our churches, and second, development of our economy."

The loan program, which disbursed the first credits this past spring, was organized as a way for the church to improve the economic situation of its members. An important byproduct of the loans will be the financial strengthening of the churches.

"It is important to help church people begin working and supporting their churches, lessening dependence on Western missions," says Steve Hochstetler Shirk, who with Cheryl, his wife, directs MCC work in the former Soviet Union. "The result will be churches able to support themselves, to pay pastors, educate leaders, build churches and reach out to the community."

The loans range from $500 to $1,500 and are being used by entrepreneurs for the purchase of everything from livestock to tools. There is even credit assisting a person who is starting a photo-processing shop.

Repayment of the loans is guaranteed by the church where the borrower is a member. The loans come due six months after disbursement, but the fund will extend the terms, depending on the status of the business and character of the borrower. The church connection with the loan offers security to the fund. "The money is not going to disappear as water in the sand," Metlenko says.

"We want people to take responsibility for the loans in order to learn to be faithful in the small things," he says.

The goal of the loan program is to develop a revolving fund. As current loans are paid, the money is available for new loans. "The MCC contribution is a start-up fund," Shirk says. By the end of 1998, MCC will have committed $30,000 in seed money to the loan program. There are no plans to add more, Shirk says, but once the fund has proven itself, it may be able to attract additional donors.—*Mark Beach of MCC News Service*

It is important to help church people begin working and supporting their churches, lessening dependence on Western missions.

—Steve Hochstetler Shirk

MEDA gets help from down under

WINNIPEG—Australia has joined the list of countries that like the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) business-oriented approach to helping the poor.

In MEDA's first contract with Australia, the country's aid agency has agreed to contribute $50,000 (U.S.) to MEDA's microenterprise program in Mozambique. The funding amounts to a one-year extension for the program. In return, MEDA has to meet certain requirements such as a minimum amount of money lent.

MEDA began work in Mozambique two years ago. The program lends money to small businesses, primarily to vendors for inventory and facilities, in the rapidly-growing Xikhelene market on the outskirts of Maputo, the capital city. A MEDA office is under construction in the centre of the market. The program has about 200 clients.

"We have a growing roster of good clients, there's a lot of excitement in the market, and we've had good collaboration with the market leadership," says Allan Sauder, the head of MEDA's International Economic Development division. "There's a lot of excitement, a lot of entrepreneurship and a lot of new investment going into the country."

About three-fourths of MEDA's overseas work is funded through contracts with governmental agencies from the United States, Canada, Denmark and elsewhere. Some contracts are with the governments in the countries where MEDA works. Sauder credited the contract with Australia to MEDA's manager in Mozambique, a native Canadian who has lived in Australia.—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service with Rich Preheim*

300 youth, sponsors get to know Jesus

Almost 300 junior high youth and sponsors from 25 congregations in four states and Ontario met on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus Aug. 7-9 for Know Jesus '98. The weekend convention is a biennial event sponsored by Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., and Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich.

This year's gathering featured speaker Michelle Hershberger from the Giving Project. Ritch Hostetler, youth minister for South Central and Western District conferences, led the worship music.

Planting seeds in good ground

Training sessions held for new adult curriculum

LINWOOD, Kan.—Wayne Swartzendruber could have gone to the circus.

While clowns, acrobats and animal tamers were performing in Wichita, Kan., Swartzendruber, from Hesston, Kan., was at a Linwood conference center Aug. 29-30 for training sessions for a new Anabaptist adult Bible study curriculum. He joined 50 other adult Sunday school teachers, teacher trainers, pastors and Christian education staff from the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) and the Church of the Brethren (COB) to become familiar with Good Ground: Letting the Word Take Root.

We're concerned mostly with young adults and middle adults who . . . end up pulling something off the shelf at the Christian bookstore or not coming to Sunday school at all.

—Ken Hawkley

"There might be a little more meaning to the Good Ground weekend than at the circus," Swartzendruber said.

The first four units of Good Ground, a joint project of Faith & Life Press and Brethren Press, came out this summer. The Mennonite Church is a cooperative user.

The standard denominational adult curricula in recent years have been the GC-MC Adult Bible Study and COB Guide to Biblical Studies, both based on the International Lesson from the interdenominational Uniform Series.

"Good Ground is geared to people with some Bible background but who are not necessarily biblically literate," said Ken Hawkley, director of adult-young adult education for the Commission on Education. "We're concerned mostly with young adults and middle adults who don't want to use the International Lesson and end up pulling something off the shelf at the Christian bookstore or not coming to Sunday school at all."

GCMC photo by Melanie Zuercher

In a demonstration of different learning styles, Good Ground adult Sunday school curriculum training session participants (left to right) Wayne Swartzendruber, Cindy Mason, both from Hesston, Kan., and Mary Ellen Dell from Trotwood, Ohio, do a hand exercise to describe the Beatitudes.

Good Ground is based on Christian educator Thomas Groome's "shared praxis" theory of the learning process: Start with human experience, go to the Bible and work as a group to figure out the Scripture's relevance for personal and communal life.

"This can be illustrated by the story of the two disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus," Hawkley told the group. "Jesus asked them, 'Why are you sad?' That's life, the context. Then Jesus proceeded to go through the whole spiel, starting with Moses, to explain how the death of Jesus fit into God's plan. That's Bible. The Christ encounter came in the breaking of bread. And then those disciples, when they recognized Jesus, went back to Jerusalem to tell the others. They took action, made a response."

The training sessions included discussion of Groome's philosophy of education, practical suggestions for teaching, question and answer periods with the GC and COB education staff, and a chance to go through one Good Ground lesson in small groups.

"I'm always looking for handles and resources," said Stan Shantz, pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz. "When I get back home, I'm going to plug this. It's better than most of the adult Bible study/Christian education curriculum I've seen."—*Melanie Zuercher of GCMC News Service*

MCC responds to Asian disasters

AKRON, Pa.—Water, too much of it and not enough, has prompted Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to contribute $30,000 to aid those people affected by natural disasters in several Asian locations.

MCC has given $10,000 to help feed 2,360 families in China victimized by the worst flooding in 50 years. MCC's funds will go to the Amity Foundation, a Chinese humanitarian agency with Christian roots, which has launched an emergency relief program.

In the Philippines, MCC has contributed $20,000 to help drought-affected farmers on the island of Mindanao. The money will provide one sack of rice to each of 525 households. The food should be enough to feed each family for three months. By then, the rains should come, enabling farmers to plant new crops.

MCC is also planning to assist flood victims in Bangladesh, although details have not been finalized.—*MCC News Service*

Evangelism plus peace plus service plus . . .

Mission workers to Spain minister in variety of ways

Dennis Byler

Connie Byler

ELKHART, Ind.—Dennis Byler, the son of former Mennonite mission workers in Argentina, was not going to be a missionary. But today, he and Connie, his wife, can't get enough of it.

"As the years go by, our calling just gets stronger," Dennis says.

The Bylers have served for 17 years in Burgos, Spain, with Mennonite Board of Missions. They got their start in the late 1970s when they were part of Fellowship of Hope, an intentional Christian community in Elkhart, Ind. Fellowship of Hope received a visit from leaders of an intentional community in Burgos; the Spanish Christians shared the need for discipleship and teaching among the rapidly growing population of teenage and young adult Christians in Burgos.

The Bylers took up the challenge presented by the Spanish Christians and moved to Burgos. "They wanted an 'older family' to be there to be an example," Dennis says. "We were supposed to just live, to show the youth how to be a Christian family."

The Bylers helped form Burgos Mennonite Evangelical Church, where they are still active.

"For many years we didn't like the word 'church'; we preferred 'community,' " Connie says. "Our homes are open homes. We share our lifestyles. Our homes and our lives get mixed up in our ministry."

Connie's role is one of ministry, compassion and friendship. She describes it as "doing whatever needs done." Says Dennis, "Just being available as a warm human being is a huge part of her ministry."

In addition to fulfilling household responsibilities, Connie spends much of her time with the women in the church and village. "Although I prefer to see myself as an older sister, many women see me as a mother," she says. "I'm excited about seeing them show spiritual motherhood to others. Being their friend is so important."

In the 1980s, Dennis pastored Burgos Mennonite Church and trained local pastors. He now is in a "supervisory capacity as pastor to the pastors," he says. "My concern is that Spanish people learn to carry their own vision."

The Bylers spend much of their time on the road visiting other congregations. They meet with the leadership, listen to their needs and participate in the worship services. Such traveling usually occupies two weekends a month.

Dennis also teaches part-time at a seminary in Madrid and has written several books on the Mennonite stance on peace and justice, a position at the crux of the Burgos congregation's theology. "There has been a very positive response to the Mennonite emphasis on peace and love for enemies," Dennis says. "Our mission is evangelism plus church planting plus peace plus service."

> **The Lord is knitting our hearts and futures with Spain.**
>
> —*Connie Byler*

The service aspect of the church's ministry revolves around the Accorema drug-rehabilitation center, a self-supported organization managed by the congregation. The patients are fully integrated into the life of the congregation. "We just want them to live in the context of a Christian community," Dennis says.

Accorema, which was started in the early 1980s, has expanded to also serve as a home for people with AIDS. Many people who successfully completed the drug-rehabilitation program and joined the church were diagnosed as having AIDS in following years.

"People have considered us to be heroic because of our work with AIDS, but there was no way out of it," Dennis says. "These were people that we'd grown to love. We couldn't have avoided the problem. It would have been artificial not to help."

The Byler family, which includes four children, is now considering retirement in Spain in order to continue their mission work. "The Lord is knitting our hearts and futures with Spain," Connie says. "It's an exciting time in Spain. We don't know where it's going, but we want to be there."—*Rachel Lewis of MBM News Service*

Although Europe is the birthplace of Mennonitism, there had been little contact with Spain until after the 1975 death of dictator Francisco Franco. Until then, the Mennonite presence in the country was through immigrants from Spain with ties to Mennonite congregations in other European countries. In 1976, Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services sent workers to Spain. The Mennonite church in Spain, Encuentro Menonita Español, has three congregations with 120 members.

Coming to terms with who I am

by Richard L. Bowman

A colleague of mine, whom I had not seen for several years, was recovering in Madison, Wis., from surgery. During a visit there to do research, I was busy and did not try to make connections with this friend. After he died unexpectedly while I was in Wisconsin, I wondered if I had failed him and God. Was this just a simple mistake in deciding priorities, or was it a major goof?

When I am struggling with a sin in my life and seem only to be on a cycle of guilt-repentance-failure-guilt, I am sure no one can love me as I am. I feel rotten, and I am sure that God knows I am rotten and does not want me as his child.

The writer of Psalm 22 captured the feelings many of us have at some time in our lives: "My God, my God, why have you deserted me? … But I am merely a worm, far less than human" (Psalm 22:1, 6 CEV).

As Christians our motivation is to be sons and daughters of God. It is not to be driven by the desire to be perfect.

Jesus reminds us of the true perspective God has of our lives: "Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. … Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds?" (Matthew 6:26 CEV).

Paul writes, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment" (Romans 12:3 NIV). How can we apply God's perspective on our worth to our own view of our lives? I suggest four affirmations.

1. I am not perfect: We are finite. We are not God; we are not all-powerful and all-knowing. Thus we will make mistakes. We need to accept that we have not done and will not do things perfectly all the time.

Does this mean I do not work at being a better college professor or a better follower of Christ? Accepting my finiteness and seeking growth in the quality of how I live my life are not mutually exclusive. However, admitting my imperfection does free me from the dominance of the pursuit of excellence. As Christians our motivation is to be sons and daughters of God. It is not to be driven by the desire to be perfect.

2. I am a sinner: Not all of my failures come from my finiteness. I also must admit that I do not meet God's perfect standard. God did not send his only son, Jesus, to redeem us from our mistakes, our finiteness; he did send Jesus to save us from our sin and its final consequence, death away from God. As David Hansen puts it, "Sin is not a mistake. Sin is our willing unlawfulness, our purposeful breaking of God's law" (*The Art of Pastoring*, InterVarsity Press, 1994).

We have sinned, and until the day we die or the day that Jesus comes back again to take us to heaven, we will sin. We need to realize this fact. Saying we need to accept it might imply there is nothing to do.

For some of us, this may seem to be what has gotten us so down to begin with—this realization of our sinfulness. However, the path to a healthy self-esteem must begin with an honest evaluation of ourselves. To truly be honest with ourselves, we must acknowledge our sinfulness.

3. I am loved by God: If we cannot acknowledge that we are imperfect and sinners, then we cannot begin to comprehend our true worth. However, if we stop after affirming our finiteness and our sinfulness, then we have unfortunately not completed the journey toward a true sense of our value. We must begin to grasp the depth of the love that God has for us.

One of the most profound theological statements we can make we relegate to a children's song, "Jesus Loves Me." Can we as adults regain the thrill from childhood of knowing that God loves us?

The admission of our guilt, of our sin, is not the end. It is only the beginning. God loves us so much that he made a way for our sins to be paid. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NIV).

God does not look at us and say, "Oh, that's all right. You didn't really disobey me." Rather he sees our sin and then offers his only Son's death and resurrection as the payment in full for those sins. That is how much God loves us. Dare we accept it?

4. I can be a child of God: God loved us so much that he wants us back as his children. "[Christ] was in the world, and … the world did not recognize him. … Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:10, 12 NIV).

God loves us, and if we face our sinfulness and reach out, seeking forgiveness, then God

will make us his children. Thank God for the right to be his child.

A profound biblical example of this is a woman who was considered sinful by her community yet came and worshiped Jesus by crying at his feet, wiping them with her hair and pouring perfume over them (see Luke 7:36-50). The interaction between this woman and Jesus illustrates how we can discover our true worth in God's eyes.

We don't know a lot about this woman, her past or her journey in faith to God, but we can gather some suggestions from this story. The fact that she came prepared to anoint Jesus with this perfume tells us she had already received God's forgiveness as proclaimed by Jesus. The fact that she did all this while crying and kneeling at Jesus' feet tells us how low she felt on people's (and maybe on God's) list of most liked people.

She did not have a high view of herself, but Jesus reached down and lifted her up (so to speak) by saying in public, "Your sins are forgiven. … Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 7:48b, 50b NIV). Her personal sense of value changed in a moment. God loved her; she was forgiven.

If we admit our imperfection, acknowledge our sinfulness and accept God's love, then we can know we are God's children—we are people of worth.

Richard L. Bowman lives in Harrisonburg, Va.

If we stop after affirming our finiteness and our sinfulness, then we have unfortunately not completed the journey toward a true sense of our value. We must begin to grasp the depth of the love that God has for us.

Martha's story

by Cheryl Denise

They told me you were coming.
I washed Grandma's purple bowls,
baked oatmeal rolls in knots and crescents,
pulled out Aunt Carol's scribbled notes
for sweet potato bake,
picked dates
cooked them into pudding,
like a wise old woman.
I dusted the walls,
washed the sheets from the guest room,
dried them in the cool November air,
set out boxes of apple and peppermint tea.
I got Jacob down the street
to kill Bessie,
his fattest chicken.

I greeted you with a kiss,
filled everyone's wine,
offered seconds, sometimes thirds.
You didn't eat much,
talking and laughing.
And Mary,
just sitting there at your feet,
like you were some kind of Messiah
made just for looking at.
And you praised her.

It's 2 a.m.
Mary's sleeping on the couch,
too full of thoughts
to help with sweeping.

Someone'll hear this story,
people are always telling stories about Jesus.
They'll say I'm a fool,
but someone had to set the table,
steep the tea
and clean the rugs.

Cheryl Denise lives in Philippi, W.Va.

4 aims of community life

The case for conference authority—part 2

by Gerald W. Schlabach

A common misperception among members of both the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) is that recent moves by some MC conferences to discipline congregations is an anomaly in an otherwise steady pattern of congregationalism in both groups. The anomaly is modernity, which has caused all Mennonite groups to struggle to find adequate ways to be faithful to Christ through their changing forms of community life.

As we become a new, integrated denomination, people from both groups must recognize the vision that has guided conference polity, particularly as it has been expressed in the current Mennonite Church. This polity has sought to structure community life around four positive aims:

1. Make a collective witness to the way of Christ in the world. God does not continue the work of Christ in history simply by spreading around the salutary influence of more and more moral individuals (the conservative evangelical model) or through the lobbying efforts of individual Christians participating in progressive social movements (the social activist model). Rather, God works through the continued embodiment of Christ in the communal life of a people.

The Christian way is not simply an abstract set of ideals, and the community or peoplehood that lives it out is not just an abstraction either. However imperfectly, people structure their life together through Christlike practices. Whatever else they do to work for peace, justice, reconciliation or evangelization in the world, they do with the integrity of having begun to model the changes they seek in their community life. Though the church fails to practice Christlike love perfectly, the very way its members bear with and forgive one another, welcome the strangers who challenge them and confess their sins itself becomes a witness to Christ's way.

The Christian way is not simply an abstract set of ideals, and the community or peoplehood that lives it out is not just an abstraction either.

2. Deliberately shape a Christian culture for ourselves as a church. Many leaders and members are increasingly apologetic about this dimension of their vision. Some have a proper concern lest they exclude people of other cultures, but they have come under the influence of a widespread fallacy that says the gospel can be known apart from culture. Some have simply let the pressures of modern culture wear them down. Still, to embody Christ and live out the gospel through communal practices inevitably creates a culture. (Even when we promote hospitality to strangers from other cultures or practice "multiculturalism," we are really trying to create a better, more humane and loving culture.)

Old and long-standing cultures may not have to be deliberate about the way they shape themselves. But amid modern North American life, the pressure to acculturate uncritically has been so great that during most of the last 150 years, Mennonites have insisted on deliberate resistance to acculturation. The idea has not been that all change is bad and no cultural adaptation is appropriate. It has simply been that as a community of discipleship, the church has the right to control the pace of change and a responsibility to shape its own culture.

3. Discern together as a people, not just as distinct congregations. The previous two points already imply the need for such discernment. What matters here is not so much the exact procedures for consultation, or the precise lines of authority, or whether congregational representatives are ordained ministers, bishops or delegates from the membership at large. What matters is that congregations who bear one another's names—and whose witness therefore colors the witness of others—must make themselves vulnerable to one another's counsel and bind themselves to collective decisions that result from the sharing of counsel.

If a given congregation dissents out of a conscience that its own congregational discernment process has shaped, it best dissents loyally, reluctantly, bearing the burden of proof and endeavoring to remain open to reasonable correction that earns respect through discernment processes that have had integrity at the conference level.

4. Be clear and concrete about what all this means in practice. Collective witness, deliberate cultural formation and peoplehood discern-

To be sure, when church leaders work harder at maintaining boundaries than at projecting the positive vision that justifies those boundaries, the result can be quite negative and the vision at the center of church life can be lost. Nonetheless, we are kidding ourselves if we think any community can ever say yes to its guiding vision of purpose without also saying no to practices that defy that vision.

ment will remain abstractions unless we translate our vision into at least some norms and standards of practice that are common to all congregations across the Mennonite peoplehood. Many have stated the point more negatively by speaking of "boundary maintenance" (see box below). To be sure, when church leaders work harder at maintaining boundaries than at projecting the positive vision that justifies those boundaries, the result can be quite negative and the vision at the center of church life can be lost. Nonetheless, we are kidding ourselves if we think any community can ever say yes to its guiding vision of purpose without also saying no to practices that defy that vision.

Imagine an environmentalist group that regularly meets in a fast-food restaurant. Imagine a baseball coach who gives pep talks on the beauty of the game without helping players unlearn bad play. Leaders of a people of peace should be more pastoral and long-suffering than an angry coach who abruptly throws a shortstop off the team for sloppy play. But a peace church simply will not remain one if it cannot imagine the possibility of eventually having to discipline—to say no to—a congregation that treats military service as optional. A process of "giving and receiving counsel" is probably not serious if we do not anticipate how we may reluctantly need to respond if another party refuses counsel.

That, as I understand it, is the case for conference authority. Of course, conferences can exercise their authority badly; standards and boundaries may end up at the wrong places. When conferences shortcut the process of peoplehood discernment, they undercut their deepest moral authority and give conference authority itself a bad name. Historically this happened when conferences imposed "regulation dress" without adequately consulting the women most affected; recently this may have happened through mail-in ballots that minimized face-to-face dialogue with congregations who accept noncelibate homosexuals as members. But the lesson here is not necessarily that we can do without conference authority—only that we must practice conference authority well.

After all, even if a decision is eventually made in favor of congregationalism, churchwide consultative bodies will have played an authoritative role in finalizing it. That irony itself suggests that our task may be to exercise conference authority in better ways but not jettison it.

A wisely crafted polity will make it easier for those who practice it to resist the abuse of authority. That is true whether authority resides at the chair of a bishop, floor of a conference, pulpit of a pastor or pews of a congregation. But no model alone will save us from ourselves if we fail in its practice. Christ is our Savior.

Gerald W. Schlabach teaches history and religion at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

What is boundary maintenance?

Some have described the historical differences between Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) members by pointing to differing strategies for maintaining group identity and cohesion.

"Boundary maintenance" is a term that sociologists use for the ways groups designate certain external markers of dress, architecture, practice or ritual in order to make clear who is a member of the group and who is not. Historically, many MC groups used such markers. Likewise, an urban gang will wear certain brands, paint graffiti on neighborhood walls and use a special handshake to maintain group cohesion. Even arbitrary markers may serve an important purpose; it finally does not matter what color a football team wears, but it must distinguish itself from its opponents to play well. When groups lose sight of the unifying purpose at the center of their life together, however, boundary markers begin to lose their meaning and may become not just arbitrary but oppressive.

"In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, and in all things charity." That is a formula that early GC Mennonites borrowed from other Protestants in order to explain a contrasting approach to group cohesion. At its best, the formula expresses confidence that if a group is clear about the central vision and convictions that give purpose to its life together, members can work together despite differences that arise as they live out that unifying vision in various locales and circumstances. The formula fails, however, to say just what is essential. Many church conflicts are over precisely that question, and the formula may actually deepen the conflict by hiding this fact.

Thus, we might do well to recognize that Christian communities need both a clear vision of purpose at their center and a clear sense of the edges beyond which actions are no longer compatible with that vision. A thriving community will know why its central vision implies certain outer boundaries and be able to explain all such boundaries in light of its positive vision.—*Gerald W. Schlabach*

Learning the right way to blow

by Suzanne
Miller Lawrence

'What a day this has been!' said Mom.

As James headed out the door to play one afternoon in autumn, he heard his mother remind him to practice his trombone. James blew. His eyes rolled back. He kicked the door frame so hard the roof began to tremble and the house fell down.

His mother, lying on the couch in what used to be the living room, called out, "I'm over here."

James poked his head through a pile of shingles, looked around, saw his mother's toes sticking out from a tangle of draperies, scuttled over to the toes and tugged at debris until she unwound.

The two of them crawled to a stable spot near the solar panels and sat down to piece their shattered thoughts together.

"You will have to rebuild," Mom said.

James' eyes opened wide. He was only 10.

"I can't do that!" he said. "I don't know how!"

"You kicked it down," she said, "but don't worry—I will help you. First, find the phone."

James dove into the rubble and came up with the phone. Fortunately, it was cordless.

Mom called information. Before long, house-rebuilders converged on the place. The head rebuilder organized the crew. James joined a group that sorted toys from boards and dishes.

Then the actual rebuilding began. James learned the names of tools and got pretty good at measuring. He helped the others fit pieces together until the house was whole.

"What a day this has been!" said Mom as she settled again into her favorite place on the couch with a book she had been reading before the fall.

"What a day!" said James as he sauntered past his Mom to turn on the TV.

"No TV," said Mom. "Remember? You still need to practice your trombone."

James' eyes began to roll, but then he stopped, breathed deeply, turned back to his room, got out his trombone and put his whole heart into learning the right way to blow.

Suzanne Miller Lawrence lives in Goessel, Kan.

Illustration by Ron Wheeler

What are Mennonites thinking?

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Tea Parties and Peacemakers, *by James C. Juhnke*

Scratching the Woodchuck: Nature on an Amish Farm, *by David Kline*

"Center of Gravity" Now in the South, *by Marshall V. King*

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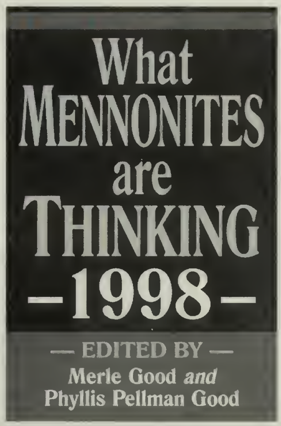

What Mennonites Are Thinking, 1998

edited by Merle Good and Phyllis Pellman Good

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New Bluffton logo gives bite to beaver

No more Mr. Nice Beaver. Bluffton (Ohio) College has had the look of its athletic teams' mascot redesigned to convey attitude and aggressiveness.

Bluffton teams have been known as the Beavers for more than 70 years. But for much of that time, the team mascot has often been pictured as a cuddly creature or as something that looked more like other animals.

The beaver's new look, developed by a Columbus, Ohio, graphic design firm, is intended to "reflect the high quality of [Bluffton] athletics and those who represent them and to enhance the ability of alumni, students and other campus community members to take pride in their mascot," according to a college news release.

Correction: The number of Christians in Nepal is estimated to be more than 300,000. The number was incorrect in the Sept. 8 *The Mennonite.*

Floridians, MDS workers embrace as friends

SANFORD, Fla.—Mennonites and Amish were unknown in Seminole County, Fla. When they started arriving to serve with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) following a February tornado, there was disbelief that total strangers would want to help local citizens rebuild.

In the six months since then, the MDS workers and the local people have developed warm and friendly relationships. "I was waiting in line to pay for my gas when a young lady with a small child in her arms noticed my MDS badge," Lester Glick says. "She threw her empty arm around me and declared, 'You are great people, and God will bless you forever.' "

Two houses constructed by MDS were dedicated in an Aug. 27 ceremony.—*MCC News Service*

Ex-Bethel controller guilty of federal charges

WICHITA, Kan.—Bethel College's former controller, already serving a 52-month sentence for embezzling $1.3 million from the North Newton, Kan., school, has pleaded guilty to federal charges related to the crime. Michael L. Lichtenberger faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison without parole after entering his guilty pleas on Sept. 11 to one count of money laundering and one count of asset forfeiture. No sentencing date has been set.

Lichtenberger agreed to forfeit a 1997 BMW, a 1994 Chevrolet Suburban, two investment accounts, a residence worth $120,000 and the entire amount of money stolen from the school.

Bethel president Douglas Penner says the college remains interested in a couple of state-imposed penalties tied to completion of the federal case: location of as much of the stolen assets as possible and possible victim-offender reconciliation. "Presumably, we can move ahead with both of those after [federal] sentencing," Penner says.—*Newton Kansan*

CPT's Hebron efforts honored

CHICAGO, Ill.—Christian Peacemaker Teams received recognition Sept. 13 for its work in Hebron, West Bank. Don Wagner, head of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at North Park University in Chicago, presented CPT with a plaque, noting the organization's "faithful and courageous efforts to bring justice, peace and freedom to all people of the Holy Land."

MEDA program continues to expand

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Economic Development Associates' first ASSETS program was started five years ago in Lancaster, Pa. Programs are also operating in Norristown, Pa., and Fresno, Calif.

And interest in the business training and support program continues to grow. Groups in five locations are looking into creating their own ASSETS programs: Toledo, Ohio; Peoria, Ill.; Harrisonburg, Va.; Washington; and Los Angeles.—*MEDA News Service*

Praise and practice

EMM photo by Samuel Lopez

A worship team practices in a Meserete Kristos Church congregation in Awasa, Ethiopia. The session was visited by participants in a July mission seminar hosted by MKC, the Mennonite church in Ethiopia. The seminar drew people from the Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania and the United States as well as from Ethiopia.

Events

Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind., 150th anniversary celebration, Oct. 3-4. Contact: 765-395-7509.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates annual convention, Nov. 12-16, Dallas, Texas. Contact: 800-665-7026.

Franconia Conference fall assembly, Nov. 13-14, Franconia, Pa.

Workers

Archibald, Gary, has ended a pastorate at First Mennonite Church, Clinton, Okla.

Conrad, Steve, ended a pastorate Aug. 23 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, Kan.

Cooper, Tim, has ended a pastorate at Hyde Park Mennonite Church, Boise, Idaho.

Eash, Brent, was installed July 26 as pastor of Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Kanagy, Wilfred, was installed July 19 as minister of finance and facilities at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, John E., has ended a pastorate at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Tim, was installed Aug. 16 as pastor of Naubinway (Mich.) Mennonite Church and Rexton (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

Shelly, Karl, was installed Sept. 13 as a member of the pastoral team at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Wall, Elmer, retired Aug. 30 as pastor of First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, Kan.

Births

Andres, Jennifer Schmidt, July 20, to Andrea and Mark Schmidt Andres, Newton, Kan.

Bartel, Aubrey Nicole, Aug. 27, to Janel and Kelvin Bartel, Newton, Kan.

Clemens, Deanna Nicole, Aug. 25, to Bruce and Jennifer (Hartman) Clemens, Lansdale, Pa.

Gingerich, Anthony Nathan, Aug. 12, to Crystal and Joe Gingerich, Wellman, Iowa.

Kemp, Angela Sue, July 24, to Bernadeth and David Kemp, Kalona, Iowa.

LaBonte, Lydia Rose, Aug. 31, to Allen and Sue (Jones) LaBonte, Harrisonburg, Va.

Lehman, Kourtney Marie, Aug. 17, to Nanette (Phillips) and Tracy Lehman, Nampa, Idaho.

Rufenacht, Levie Lowell, Aug. 29, to Dawn and Doug Rufenacht, Archbold, Ohio.

Sanchez, Leah Jolane, July 10, to Amy (Gritmacker) and Dan Sanchez, Newton, Kan.

Schluckebier, Peyton Thomas, Aug. 28, to Joe and Trisha (Troyer) Schluckebier, Lincoln, Neb.

Short, Michael Ryan, Aug. 22, to Ryan and Sarah (Klingelsmith) Short, Archbold, Ohio.

Stutzman, Brooke Marie, Aug. 28, to Julie (Kandel) and Mark Stutzman, Millersburg, Ohio.

Marriages

Ackley/Yoder: Kevin Ackley, Ames, Iowa, and Jill Yoder, Hesston, Kan., Aug. 8, by Ann Showalter.

Bergey/Marcho: Luke Bergey, Souderton, Pa., and Rachelle Marcho, Harleysville, Pa., Aug. 29, by John Ehst.

Boshart/Eshleman: Reagan Eileen Boshart, Harrisonburg, Va., and Lee Edward Eshleman, Harrisonburg, Aug. 22, by Robert Stainback.

Briskey/Wagner: Jean Briskey, Wauseon, Ohio, and Lew Wagner, Royal City, Wash., Aug. 1, by Basil Martin.

Bussard/Edwards: Daniel Bussard, Quarryville, Pa., and Amanda Edwards, Oxford, Pa., Aug. 29, by Rick Conrad.

Diener/Holm: Glen Diener, Hillsboro, Kan., and Sharon Holm, Mason City, Neb., July 18.

Franz/Gudenkauf: Kirk Franz, Manhattan, Kan., and Shannon Gudenkauf, Vassar, Kan., Aug. 29, by Harris Waltner.

Franzen/Sacks: Jackie Franzen, Lederach, Pa., and Barry Sacks, Lederach, Aug. 29, by James Longacre.

Girmus/Schweitzer: Angela Girmus, Geneva, Neb., and Derek Schweitzer, Shickley, Neb., Aug. 1, by Dennis Hendrick and Wilton Detweiler.

Hiebner/Kroeker: Troy Hiebner, Henderson, Neb., and Corianne Kroeker, Henderson, Aug. 15, by Weldon Martens.

Hoffer/Lehman: Bretton Hoffer, Aberdeen, Idaho, and Lacy Lehman, Pocatello, Idaho, Aug. 29, by Monty Ledford.

Kaufman/Stigge: David Kaufman, Newton, Kan., and Sydney Leigh Stigge, Newton, Sept. 5, by Steve and Susan Ortman Goering and Darrell Fast.

Knapp/Schmidt: Brenda Lea Knapp, Bloomfield, Iowa, and Thomas Patrick Schmidt, Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 8, by Monsignor Dawson.

Koelling/Koelling: Cheryl Koelling, Great Bend, Kan., and Wayne Koelling, Great Bend, Aug. 7, by Muriel Stackley.

Stanek/Swartzendruber: Jacqueline Starr Stanek, Ohiowa, Neb., and Christopher Swartzendruber, Shickley, Neb., June 27, by Wilton Detweiler.

Deaths

Aeschliman, Luella Liechty King, 73, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 28. Survivors: husband, Kenneth; children Gary King, Ron King, Charlene Starry, Joyce Seiler; six stepchildren; 11 grandchildren; 13 stepgrandchildren; two stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 31 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Dee Swartz and Wayne Pipkin.

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Ash, Orval, 80, Gap, Pa., died July 16. Survivors: wife, Bertha; children John, Melvin, Ruth Christner; seven grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren; four stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: July 21 Atglen, Pa., by Enno Jurisson, Melville Nafziger, and Leroy Umble.

Augspurger, Cleo, 88, Pulaski, Iowa, died Aug. 11. Survivors: children Ogden, Samuel; four grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 17 at Pulaski, by Verney Unruh.

Baer, Cora Marjorie, 90, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 29. Burial: Sept. 1 at Pettisville, Ohio, by James Roynon and Edward Diener.

Ehrisman, Ezra, 92, Milford, Neb., died Aug. 29 of a stroke. Survivors: wife, Edna; children Don, Berdean Miller, Leland, Bob; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 2 at Milford, by Marlin Kym.

Friesen, Douglas Andrew, 34, Grand Forks, Minn., died Aug. 11 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Monica; children Kathryn, Richard, Sara; parents, Peter and Marilyn Friesen; grandparents, Herman and Mabel Schafer. Burial: Aug. 17 at Freeman, S.D., by Phil Glanzer and Ken Peterson.

Frye, Joas, 78, Middlebury, Ind., died Aug. 27 from an auto accident. Survivors: wife, Barbara; children David, Calvin, Philip; stepchildren, Ronald Gingerich, Kenneth Gingerich, Larry Gingerich, Jim Gingerich; six grandchildren; five step-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 30 at Middlebury by Linford Martin and Jeff Kauffman.

Hershberger, Elva Flinner, 87, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Aug. 2S. Survivors: children Keith, Sandra Hofstetter; three grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 28 at Walnut Creek by Ross Miller.

Hofer, Annie Kleinsasser, 89, Freeman, S.D., died Sept. 7. Survivors: children Deloris Stahl, Delmer, Harvey, Arlyss Ann Brockmueller. Burial: Sept. 11 at Freeman by Ken Peterson.

Kindle, Kathleen Amstutz, 74, Bluffton, Ohio, died Aug. 18. Burial: Aug. 22 at Bluffton by Dorothy Nickel Friesen and Doug Luginbill.

Lehman, Carl Menno, 83, Bluffton, Ohio, died Sept. 5. Survivors: children Daniel, Susan Sommer, John, Rebecca Mitchell, Mary Edmiston, Barbara Lemay; 20 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Sept 7 at Bluffton by Dorothy Nickel Friesen.

Robbins, Wilma Yerg, 88, Montour, Pa, died Aug. 25 of cancer. Survivors: children Helen Dimm, George, Glen, Dale Smith; 12 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 28 at Montour by Ben Lapp and Michael Watson.

Rupp, Elnora Beck, 94, Archbold, Ohio, died Aug. 10. Survivors: son, Tom; two grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 12 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Wayne Pipkin and Charles Gautsche.

Sanchez, Emma Garcia, 87, La Junta, Colo., died Aug. 17 of cancer. Survivors: children Gilbert, Dale, Robert Montoya, David, Elsie Reynolds, Katie Sands, Helen Otero, Jenny Foster, Lydia Buell, Lucille Sena; 28 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Burial: Aug. 21 at La Junta by Merritt Welty.

Schmidt, Selma Penner, 87, North Newton, Kan., died July 27 of a heart attack. Survivors: children Lynette House, Howard, Angela Boho, Delene; two grandchildren. Memorial service Sept. 13.

Showalter, Elizabeth Anna, 91, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 30. Burial: Sept. 2 at Broadway, Va., by Randall Shull, Harvey Yoder and Myron Augsburger.

Stere, Adeline Albrecht, 93, Tavistock, Ont., died Aug. 30. Survivors: daughter, Shirley Schmidt; three grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept 2 at Tavistock by Darrel Toews.

Sutter, Clarence R., 77, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, died Aug. 20 of heart failure. Survivors: wife, Josephine; children Freda Dunlavy, Becci Brummitt, Chuck, Jerry, Pete, Dan; 24 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 22 at Wayland, Iowa, by Marc Hershberger and Wayne Kamm.

Voth, William, 96, Newton, Kan., died Aug. 20. Survivors: children Kenneth, Roland, Harley, Emma Thierstein, Carol Schmidt; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 24 at Newton by Darrell Fast.

Wenger, Fannie Harkins, 94, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 2 of complications from a stroke. Survivors: Betty Litwiller, Robert; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. S at Goshen by Nancy Kauffman.

Yarman, Larry, 60, Wadsworth, Ohio, died Aug. 25 of heart problems. Survivors: wife, Ruth; children Jeff, Darol, Penny; three grandchildren; mother, Jeanette Yarman. Burial: Aug. 31 at Wadsworth by James Mohr.

Yoder, Lavina Kathryn, 86, West Liberty, Ohio, died Aug. 11. Burial: Aug. 14 at West Liberty by Larry Augsburger.

Young, Fern Louise Brown, 80, Oakwood Village, Ohio, died Aug. 24. Survivors: son, Glenn; two grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 28 at Bedford Heights, Ohio, by David Orr.

Notice: Items for Births, Marriages and Deaths need to be submitted within two months of the event.

Classifieds

West Fallowfield Christian School has an opening for a part-time ***librarian.*** Training and experience preferred. Interested people should contact Kay Predmore, interim principal, West Fallowfield Christian School, 610-593-5011; fax 610-593-6041.

Heartland International, Inc., is interviewing for ***independent Conklin Company marketing representatives*** in Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Pennsylvania. Opportunity for promotion into sales management. Excellent commissions. We train. Agricultural or construction experience a plus.

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Friendship Community, Lancaster County, Pa., has ***program coordinator*** position available immediately. Responsibilities include coordinating residential program and supervising staff. Qualifications include degree in human services/education and two years experience with developmental disabilities.

Call Denise Herr, 717-656-2466, for more information.

Mennonite Central Committee seeks applicants for the following ***urgent openings:*** Livestock adviser/specialist, Bangladesh; inoculant production supervisor, Bangladesh; street children's worker, Bolivia; outreach/intake coordinator for low-income housing, Homestead, Fla. (Spanish required).

For more information contact MCC Human Resources in Akron, Pa.: 717-859-1151, email inq@mcc.org; or Winnipeg: (204) 261-6381, email prs@mennonitecc.ca.org.

Mennonite Board of Missions, Mennonite Media department seeks half-time ***video-Internet producer*** who will function in a work team environment. Video producer experience and an understanding of Mennonite-Anabaptist beliefs and practices required. Available to travel. Position open immediately. Resumes accepted until Sept. 30, 1998.

Send resume to Erma Brunk, 1251 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-574-4872; email erma@mennomedia.org.

Spruce Lake Retreat seeks ***executive director*** to provide leadership in camping ministries, vision and development. Appropriate education and experience required. Spruce Lake Retreat is a year-round facility of Franconia Mennonite Camping Association, located in northeastern Pennsylvania. Information about facilities and program is available at www.sprucelake.org.

Apply to Dennis Gehman, 616 Allentown Road, Telford, PA 18969-2204; email dennis@gehmanbuilder.com.

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Mennonite
Central
Committee

by Rich Preheim

You will hear rumors

Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding had heard the reports: Arab Christians in Israel are being persecuted by the Palestinian authorities and Muslim extremists. But EMEU discovered that believers don't have to run for the hills.

"What we found … was an intense desire for harmony among both Christians and Muslims from Galilee to Gaza," says EMEU executive director Donald Wagner. "There is a handful of very isolated, personal incidents but no indication of an anti-Christian tide rising."

EMEU is not the only group to make that discovery, according to *Christianity Today,* contrary to Israeli government and news media reports. Similar conclusions have been made by the Palestinian Human Rights Monitor and the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment.

"There is no persecution," says Jiryus Khouri, mayor of the Christian village Fasula. "But there is real tension between Christians, Muslims and Jews."

While the Koran mandates death for any Muslim who converts, there have been no executions. In fact, Palestinian Christians are eager to share examples of Christian-Muslim cooperation. "We are like brothers," says Maher Ayad, a Baptist pastor in Gaza. "We live in the same land."

Making choices

"Life, what a beautiful choice" is one of the slogans used by the anti-abortion movement. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints would no doubt agree. And in the end, the church's Standing High Council says, it is still a choice.

In a revised statement on abortion published in the denominational *Saints Herald,* the council emphasizes "placing a high value on the preservation of life" and on teaching faithful marriages and "premarital preparation." At the same time, to call abortion either murder or an amoral medical procedure is simplistic.

According to the statement, "There are … ethical choices in which the church, while emphasizing basic Christian principles, is called to support individuals in exercising their free moral agency as they engage in responsible decision making."

From the front lines

The battles between believers and the state military continue to rage in the European theater. But there are victories to be reported. In Liverpool, England, four women—known as Seeds of Hope Ploughshares—have been acquitted of criminal damage and conspiracy charges for trying to disarm the guidance system on a warplane sold to the Indonesian government. Such planes have been used to bomb villages in Indonesia's ongoing repression of East Timor. Indonesia refused delivery of the plane as damaged goods. According to the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the jury found the accused not guilty because their actions were necessary to prevent a greater crime: attacks on the East Timorese people.

Meanwhile, Herwig Pickert, a colonel in the German army and member of the Evangelical Church in Germany, has returned his "Cross of Honor in Gold" to the defense minister, reports *Transcontinental Peace Newsletter.* Pickert is protesting a reprimand from his superior officer after writing a letter criticizing the army as an "essential instrument" in the Nazis' criminal conduct in World War II.

Zap! Bam! Pow! Salvation!

Move over Batman, here comes King David. *Mission Frontiers Bulletin* says proclaimers of the good news are now utilizing the world's most popular literature: comic books.

Since 1982, the United Bible Societies have distributed about 100 million copies of 13 comic-book titles in more than 100 languages. More than 1 million such publications have been sold in India since the mid-1990s. North American Indian Ministries has produced comic books set in the Native American context. A Japanese Christian has published her story in comic-book form.

The reason for putting the gospel into such a colorful, heavily illustrated format is simple: That's what people read. Maybe not in the United States, where the most popular comic book sells only 300,000 copies a month. But in Japan, 40 percent of all printed materials are comic books. In the Philippines, 40 percent of the population reads comic books daily.

Ask and ye shall receive

Students in last year's seventh-grade class at St. Genevieve, a Catholic school in Chicago, had an assignment to write to a public figure and ask for a donation to the class. Most students wrote sports teams and got gifts and autographs. But according to *National Catholic Reporter,* Frank Kraut wrote Microsoft CEO Bill Gates—and got $10,000 worth of software for the school.

Tidbits

- The 1998 Global March for Jesus, held May 30, had some 50 million participants from more than 130 countries. (*The Wesleyan Advocate*)
- The number of U.S. Korean congregations in the United Methodist Church has jumped from 20 in the mid-1970s to 285 plus 62 mission churches today. (*Informer*)
- Guatemala's National Evangelical Presbyterian Church voted this spring to ordain women. (*Sojourners)*
- Fifty-six percent of first-time Communion participants in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1995 were fifth graders. (*The Messenger*)
- Land has been purchased near Cincinnati for a facility which will include a Creation Museum of Natural History. (*Wireless Age)*

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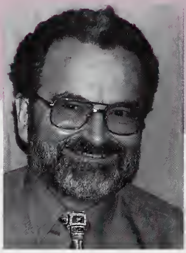


J. Lorne Peachey

From two who think they're right to one that can be wrong

A weekend with extended family each August finds me worshiping with a Mennonite congregation in the mountains of central Pennsylvania. It's a vibrant, alive group concerned about bringing the good news to its neighbors. The Sunday before I attended this year five had been baptized as members.

"But not many of us read *The Mennonite*," one of the congregation's matriarchs told me after the service. "There's not much interest here in the broader church. Most of these new people don't even know about integration."

Then she went on: "You want to know what I think of your integration?" (*Mine?* I looked quickly behind to see if anyone else were in on this conversation. Nope, just me.) Of course I wanted to know what she thought.

"From what I read and what I'm hearing, it seems to me you're trying to merge two groups who both think they're right."

I wanted to protest: "You don't understand. Both the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) have long traditions that need to be respected. There are histories that mean a lot to both. There are jobs and positions on the line."

Is it possible there is another way, something we haven't dreamed up yet? Can we give our leaders the freedom they need to explore what this might be?

But I also had to admit that much of her critique is valid. As the day for integration draws closer, words like "non-negotiable," "must have" and "will never go along with" are cropping into our discussions. Particularly on the issue of polity—i.e., who can belong to the new denomination, how it will be structured and who will be accountable to whom—lines are being drawn with the words "right" or "true" associated with them.

It would be easy to blame those working with the hard details of integration. Some do worry about turf and jobs. But these people also represent the larger church, trying to determine how it wants to be the body of Christ in the future.

The Integration Exploration Committee, for example, crisscrossed North America during its six years of work, listening to all sorts of opinions on whether we should merge and how. More recently the Integration Committee held four regional consultations with conference leaders, during which I heard that many of us, be we GC or MC, like who we are and may be reluctant to consider being church in a new way.

Crucial tests of how much we want to change will come in the weeks ahead as the Integration Committee and the two committees developing structures for the church in the United States and Canada bring their recommendations to the general boards—and through them to area conferences and eventually to congregations. How will we respond? Will we make sure our traditions are being preserved? Will we demand room for our pet projects? Will we employ the language of "right"?

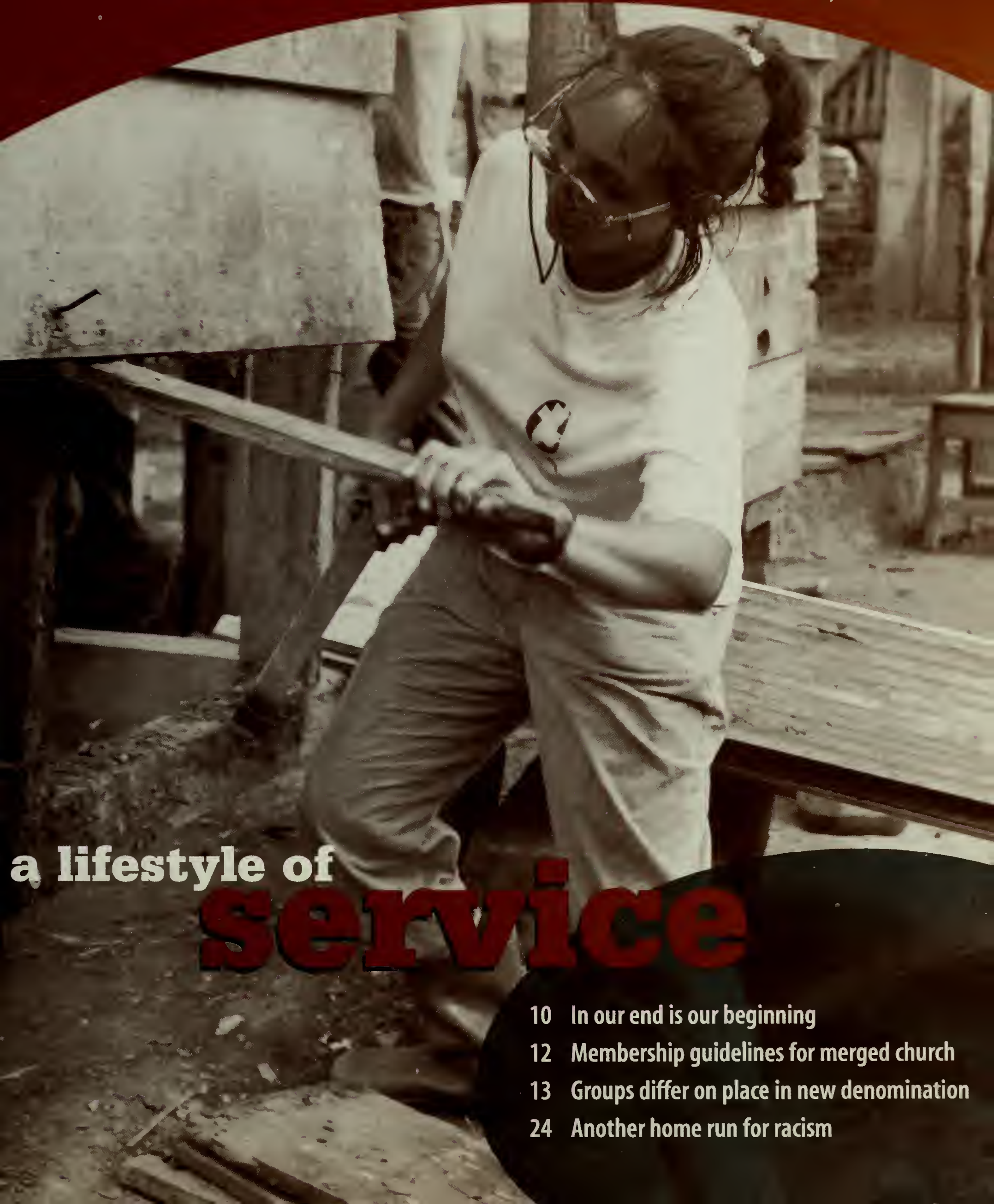
Or will we look for something new, something different? Will we dare to call for a way of being church that, while it may incorporate the best of what is now GC and MC, dares to go beyond to something new? That something new could be more faithful to God. Or it could be wrong. We'll never know which until we try.

Is it possible there is another way, something we haven't dreamed up yet? Can we give our leaders the freedom they need to explore what this might be? Or will we continually call them back to what's comfortable because we know it's "right"? Could it be that, in integration, God is calling us to move from two groups who know they're right to one with enough faith and resiliency to dare to risk being wrong?

I believe that kind of risk can capture the imagination of the church. I can't guarantee that the members of Shady Pine Mennonite Church in Spring Run, Pa., will become more interested in integration. But I suspect they will be enthusiastic about belonging to a church that exhibits such faith and such daring.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

October 6, 1998



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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

The power of advocacy

Wilma Ann Bailey's articles on "Biblical and Theological Reasons for Advocacy to Government" (Sept. 8 and Sept. 15) were much appreciated. As a child, I somehow developed an image of government as an evil figure which represented everything that Anabaptism stood against. Years later, I am pursuing a degree in public administration with plans to work in local government administration.

While our organized government system is flawed—just like any administrative organization—it definitely contains a role for Anabaptist voices, whether as advocates from the outside or as employees from within. The Anabaptist role in government is a tricky one which must be carved with great care and deliberation, but it can prove to be a powerful tool to witness and to serve.—*Joy Kraybill, Raleigh, N.C.*

Wilma Ann Bailey correctly admonishes that we Anabaptists should be advocates for "those least able to speak up or care for themselves: the poor and needy, the widows and the strangers" (Sept. 15). These indeed need more care and justice. Yet another group, preborn children, are being legally murdered by the thousands in our country. Do they not need our advocacy too? If we would call or write our legislators, we Anabaptist Christians could help overturn the veto of our president, who refuses to back laws which would limit the killing of helpless infants.—*David H. Clymer Shirleysburg, Pa.*

God in the city

Because I am a farm girl with the thick blood of Mennonite peasantry in my veins, I am very happy in the city. I find it hurtful to have my home referred to as "that terrible economic citadel of America where only Mammon is worshiped" (Word and Spirit, Sept. 15). I am happy and content here because I have found God here.

There are several reasons I have chosen to live in Philadelphia. It is possible for my husband and me to keep our living expenses low enough that one or the other of us can be home with our young children. I have chosen to live here for the quality of life I find. Friends work to creatively advance the kingdom of God in a very complex world. There is hope, as evidenced by the fresh tomatoes we grow in our community garden plot where an abandoned building once stood.

Please continue to visit our theaters, concerts, art museums, ethnic restaurants and the zoo. But while you are at it, also visit us. Visit the Mennonites who have made the city their home.—*Carol Martin Johnson, Philadelphia*

God is indeed at work in the city and not only in quiet churches. A four-day visit to New York may not reveal it. But if you stick around and look and listen and mingle, you will find God there and people doing [God's] work.

I well understand that many people prefer living in the country, and that is OK. But I encourage the Mennonite denomination to become even more involved in our cities because that is where so many people are who need to learn to know the Lord. And I wonder how people who dislike cities will adjust to the heavenly city, New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10).—*Ruth L. Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Second opinions on checkup

Cathleen Hockman-Wert has asked for continuing "special care ... to include women's voices" in *The Mennonite* and that "more men should hush up" (Speaking Out, Sept. 8). But our search for diversity continues to be restricted to biology, i.e., gender and race. We still exclude ideological diversity, except for necessarily brief letters in Readers Say. Our media speak up well for nonconservative views that I favor, but we should not hush up about the need for a little diversity of thought in Mennonite power centers, even if that requires a greater diversity of personnel, like the Catholic requirement of a devil's advocate in some deliberations.

Any single point of view can be found wrong later. Recall that some of our church leaders gave excuses for the likes of Hitler and Stalin. We again follow rather than help lead the national debate in the chattering classes: the elite media, academia and ecclesia. This may not change soon, but let's be aware that our constant call for diversity is quite undiversified, and we even call for silence from perhaps presumably guilty quarters.—*Ronald Rich, Bluffton, Ohio*

Surely Cathleen Hockman-Wert was not serious in her six-month checkup of *The Mennonite*. If she was being serious, there are some missing links. This article is only a tally sheet of the activities of this publication with no demographic or other statistical support. I think Hockman-Wert should give some thought to making statements about who

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y readers say

should "hush up" based on gender. That is not a striving for hearing what the Spirit says but rather a grinding of a personal agenda ax. *—Dan Lais, Lebanon Ore.*

Feeling welcomed and included

It has been one full year since a somewhat fateful encounter with two local Mennonite ministers at our community morning prayer breakfast stirred the notion to visit one of your churches. There was no great altruistic plan, no strong sense of a God-seeking mission, perhaps even a bit of indifference mixed with good, old-fashioned curiosity. Thus we became what we respectfully refer to ourselves as "regular visitors" to Sunday school and church and began a genuine desire to participate in the activities, to learn and study more about the beliefs and teachings of the Mennonite religion. Soon we will be taking membership class, where we will no doubt face some difficulties between what we believe is required to live as Christians and the covenants for membership in this Mennonite congregation and conference. I have been enlightened by your teachings. My life has been enriched by your association. My desire to live as a Christian has been enhanced by your presence. All because I felt welcomed, felt included.*—Darrell Borchardt, Wayland, Iowa*

No Tower of Babel

Re "What It Takes to Become a Multicultural Church" (Aug. 18): The best way to help immigrants adjust to life in the United States isencouraging them to learn English. If we want a multicultural society to be able to communicate and function, then let's have one language. Let us not build another Tower of Babel because of the lack of respect for immigrants' intelligence.*—Helen Gyger, Schwenksville, Pa.*

Cover photo
by Marilyn Nolt

I want to be a child of God's. That means loving my enemies.

—J. Lorne Peachey, editorial, Aug. 25

It is obvious that most middle-class Western Christians do not practice what Jesus preached.

—Ron Sider, "Jesus Must Weep," Aug. 25

We have found the enemy

The editorial "An Action Plan for Enemies" was well-spoken yet still needs a bridge to Ron Sider's article, "Jesus Must Weep" (both Aug. 25). Given the U.S. position atop the world's economic and military power structure, U.S. citizens must recognize that, in many cases, we are the enemy.

We became well aware of our "enemy" status through visits with Lao villagers who survived the intense U.S. bombing of the Indochina War. While we felt no personal animosity during these encounters, anger and resentment toward the U.S. government hung in the air between us, sometimes silent, sometimes voiced. The very structures which brought nurture and security into our lives had created years of terror and sorrow for these Lao villagers.

To find space in our hearts to love our enemies is a profound spiritual task. To find a way to live within U.S. economic and military structures without being the enemy is also a deeply spiritual challenge. Perhaps we could add "remove sword" to the action plan for enemies. For until I remove my economic and military sword, I will not be able to reconcile with my brothers and sisters who feel its oppression. *—Titus Peachey, Lancaster, Pa.*

Love and choice

We are told that we will be known as God's disciples if we have love for one another. If gays and lesbians express their love in ways that are mutually acceptable as consenting adults, should I hate them or fear them because I choose other ways to express my love? Or can I love them and accept them as fellow disciples of Christ?

I attended this summer's Supportive Congregations Network International Gathering in Wichita, Kan. The atmosphere was warm, supportive and accepting. SCN is beginning a new network called Friends of SCN to recognize and help supportive individuals and congregations make connections for support, prayer, gatherings and study. I'm ready to help them meet their goal of 5,000 signatures by 2000. *—Martha F. Graber, North Newton, Kan.*

I personally find myself somewhat uncomfortable around homosexual men. Simply stated, they are unattractive to me, and some are downright offensive. But after 50 years of being a human being, learning and observing human sexuality, I have no doubts about whether or not our sex orientations and sexual drives are a matter of choice. Condemnation of homosexual orientation as sin implies a choice. So these people made sinful choices? Who among us heterosexuals can recall the time and circumstances when we chose to be heterosexual?*—James L. Peachey, Lewistown, Pa.*

From Russia but not Russian

I offer a brief response to "Russians to Canada Note Anniversaries" (Aug. 25). The information is correct, but I believe the headline is poorly chosen. The Mennonites who have come through Russia/Ukraine/Soviet Union have consistently emphasized that they were ethnically not Russians or Ukrainians. The conventional terminology in history books has, I believe, been "Russian Mennonites." More recently, the code name "Russians" has come to have a somewhat pejorative connotation in connection with the German "Aussiedler"—including Mennonites—who have emigrated from the former Soviet Union to Germany in the past 25 years. So while the term may be used correctly from a geographical-political point of view, it suggests lack of sensitivity to the nuances of the Mennonite experience. I would urge care in the choice of language. *—Victor Kliewer, Leamington, Ont.*

Definition of violence

"Wrapped in Angel's Wings" (Aug. 18) helps underscore the complexity of seeking to be nonviolent in a violent world. One could raise the question of how a person could be grateful for the protection described and still hold a view that condemns that same action as sin. I have lived for a number of years with this insight. It has also not changed my personal commitment to nonresistance. It has made me aware, however, that true believers can honestly come out differently. I refuse to de-Christianize these people but will be true to my conscience.

I do have a problem with the definition of violence as found in "A Mennonite Statement on Violence." It reads as follows: "We define violence as the human exercise of physical, emotional, social or technological power which results in injury or harm to oneself or others. Any form of human violence, whether mild or extreme, is an expression of evil." With this definition we condemn as sin that which was done by the officers in the story referred to. Why not take the dictionary definition of "an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power"?*—Philip E. Miller, Chesapeake, Va.*

How the deck is stacked in the Mennonite Game

by Nina Forsythe

It says here in the *Gospel Herald*
that John Denver had Mennonite roots.
He was born John Deutschendorf,
grandson of Anna Koop, whose parents were …
(the genealogy is almost as thorough
as the one my mother had to prepare
when a schoolgirl in Nazi Germany).
He gave a concert at Goshen College
in the sixties and sang about peace.
This seems to be important
to the *Gospel Herald*, as if Mennonites
aren't quite legitimate unless one of them
makes it big on the outside,
nevermind that he changed his name
and became a disciple of EST,
despising his birthright.
(Mennonites are used to being despised,
and blood is thicker than religion.)

And I of the wrong name and the wrong parentage,
who turned my back on my own birthright
and drowned myself for the Anabaptist vision,
who teach my children about Dirk Willems
while their Mennonite friends preach the gospel
of Michael Jordan, I remain
a stranger in the family.

Nina Forsythe lives in Hillsboro, Kan.

Living learning serving

Long-term voluntary service presents a visible, alternative lifestyle to our acquisitive, self-serving society.

by Melanie Zuercher

Pat Cameron was introduced to voluntary service through "the regular, one- to two-year program," he says. He served a 16-month volunteer term in Arvada, Colo., in 1974 and a two-month stint in Chicago in 1984 before taking on the first of several volunteer positions in Wichita, Kan., where he has been since 1991. "I came to see VS as a lifestyle," he says.

Pat is not alone in choosing voluntary service as a lifestyle. "There's real value in becoming part of the community where you're living, learning and serving—you have more time to have an impact if you're part of the neighborhood," says Jane Hare, who, with her husband, Wes, spent six years in the San Antonio, Texas, Mennonite Voluntary Service unit before moving to the Richmond, Va., MVS unit in 1995.

> **To choose not to acquire wealth is a deeply spiritual undertaking, though it might not have been spiritually motivated. It's countercultural.**—*Miles Reimer*

Several long-term voluntary service workers gathered during the Mennonite Voluntary Service all-unit retreat in Knob Noster, Mo., at the end of May to talk about the history and the future of long-term service. Some of their observations are included in the article at right. MVS is a joint program of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church.

"Voluntary service is kind of a variation on intentional poverty," says Miles Reimer, MVS director. "Most of us ... have the means to get a job and earn money. To choose not to acquire wealth is a deeply spiritual undertaking, though it might not have been spiritually motivated. It's countercultural—a statement to the culture around us, a decision to live differently, including [doing] different kinds of services with and [for] other people."

"There are people in the churches who are looking for alternatives, and if there is an organized, visible long-term voluntary service presence, that's an example of how to do things differently," adds Pat. "It's hooking in with the part of the church community that represents what the church ought to be, saying no to materialism and being a witness to the larger church in that way."

Wes Hare agrees that long-term voluntary service has a prophetic tone. "I kind of see myself as a missionary to First Mennonite Church of Richmond," he says. "I wasn't invited as such, and they don't see themselves that way. But I'm trying to pull them an inch or two."

What are the issues that long-termers face?

"There's no set scheme or structure currently in place for long-term voluntary service," says Miles. "Those who are now in it have worked out their own structures or arrangements with MVS."

For Pat, these arrangements have become more complicated in recent years. He and his wife, Geneva Hershberger (who spent three years with Mennonite Central Committee in Kentucky and 2 1/2 more in Bolivia with MCC before going into service in Wichita), have a young son. They now face questions about relationships with parents and grandparents that require travel, saving money for emergencies, retirement, college expenses and home ownership, says Pat.

Mainstream: "You start having a family, maybe acquire a house, and it's not easy to uproot and move, but you don't want to get sucked into the mainstream either," he says. "Part of what service is about is empowering people in their neighborhoods—for example,

Being a witness: Pat Cameron at work in Wichita, Kan.

MVS photo

An atmosphere of service: Geneva Hershberger, Pat Cameron and their son Adam, at home in Wichita, Kan.

[helping them own] their own homes. We say it's desirable for all kinds of people [to own their own homes] but not for our volunteers."

Four years ago, Geneva took a paying job in the Wichita public school system, and she is working on a master's degree. The couple now owns a house and has an arrangement with MVS for how to handle Geneva's salary, her education expenses and their house payments, while still keeping their lifestyle simple and their income low.

"My vision would be for long-term MVSers to be supported by the community—the neighborhood and the church," says Jane.

"There's more of an interest now [on the part of] churches in being direct partners in mission," adds Jim Bixler, who began doing voluntary service after he retired. He has been in Elkhart, Ind., supported by Mennonite Board of Missions, since 1995. "So far that has mostly meant overseas partnerships, but we hope this can happen more domestically, too."

Salaries: Some churches are rising to the challenge: Seattle Mennonite Church pays the salary for its MVS local program coordinator, Cole Hull, who has worked in a number of voluntary service assignments since 1984, and Shalom Mennonite Fellowship, the support congregation for the Tucson, Ariz., MVS unit, is exploring ways to do the same for its recently hired local program coordinator.

Despite some of the complexities involved in living a life of long-term service, the volunteers don't plan to give it up.

> **There are people in the churches who are looking for alternatives, and if there is an organized, visible long-term voluntary service presence, that's an example of how to do things differently. It's hooking in with the part of the church community that represents what the church ought to be, saying no to materialism.**—*Pat Cameron*

"It's getting harder and harder to raise children in an atmosphere of service," says Pat. "You almost have to go overseas to do it. Adam [his son] doesn't yet understand that MVS is about service. He knows there's something different about us—going to retreats, meeting regularly with Miles. What I hope for him is that he understands his parents could have made a choice to do things differently, to make more money.

"It's a conversation that the Mennonite church isn't having, about how much is enough."

"The message to the church, what we're responsible to say," Miles adds, "is we need to do [long-term voluntary service] because God is calling us to this [lifestyle] as people who are committed to following Jesus Christ."

Melanie Zuercher is news editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Central Committee has recently begun addressing the issue of simple living through its packet "World of Enough," available from regional and national MCC offices in North America. Contact MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

Homeless in Seattle

© Bob Dalles

A German volunteer confronts challenges daily in one of Seattle's largest homeless shelters.

by Melanie Zuercher

When Barbara Hahm found herself in charge of one of the largest homeless shelters in Seattle last Christmas, she knew she had found the challenge she was looking for.

Barbara, from Dessau, Germany, a small town near Berlin, works under Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) as a referral and information counselor at the Downtown Emergency Services Center in Seattle.

MVS is a program of the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church. Barbara was one of the first two workers placed with MVS through a German-based organization called Eirene, which sends Christian service workers to different parts of the world.

The Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) accepts women, as well as men over 50 and/or disabled and/or in drug or alcohol treatment. It is known as a "tough and rough place," says Barbara. "If I tell someone where I work, they're shocked. We have clients who have been turned out of other shelters. We're the last resort."

Barbara studied social work in Germany and wanted "to do something related to my studies and to live in a foreign country." In addition, says this Lutheran "preacher's kid" (the pastor is her mother), "I went into social work because I've wanted to serve people all my life. You don't do social work for the money."

She also wanted particularly to work with homeless people. "We don't have many in Germany. There's a different social welfare system—it's pretty hard to be homeless. There's more low-income housing so there's pretty much housing for everyone. And the mentally ill are in institutions.

"It's a challenge, and I wanted to be challenged. I wanted a really tough job. I thought it would be tough and I thought it wouldn't be fun. After a few months, I realized it was fun—the people are so interesting. They have so many stories to tell. Everyone has a different history."

As a referral counselor, Barbara is part of a team of four who work set hours during the day, when people come needing all kinds of help—from food to medical or dental care to laundry services to treatment for addiction.

The shelter can sleep up to 219 people, on mats on the floor. Barbara estimates there are 130 clients at the DESC at any given time during the day. "We usually see around 400 people a day. There are 5,000 registered clients—those who have a shelter ID card."

Permanent housing: Barbara is also a caseworker for about 10 clients, for whom the main need and responsibility is to find permanent housing. "In January, I moved my first client into housing, and I now have done three," she says. "Even if you get them in, you don't know if they can maintain it. It's a big success to get a client into housing but it's a whole new set of problems."

She offers Ray (not his real name) as a case study of what she does. "He needs a lot of attention. He walks around the shelter annoying other staff. At first, he would show up in my office four times a day, until I limited him to appointments. He's mentally ill and has anger-management problems. He used to live with his father and stepmother until they kicked him out," she says.

She moved Ray into housing, she says, right across the street from the shelter. "All the low-income housing is downtown, which is bad, because the clients don't get away from the drug scene."

She spent her birthday in January in the hospital with Ray, waiting for his mental health caseworker, because he had threatened suicide. "He's suicidal frequently, but sometimes it's just for attention. I've gotten to know him well enough to tell what he means when he says he's depressed," she says.

Her clients come from all over the United States, she says. "Seattle draws a lot of homeless because of the [mild year-round] climate and the good social services. If you're homeless in Seattle, you don't have to worry about food or clothes—you can find churches or agencies or food banks everywhere," she says.

She has learned a lot about homelessness, too. "I realized how small the step to homelessness can be [in the United States]—one car accident where you can't pay the bills, and you are out on the street. In Germany, you can't be without medical insurance," she says.

Women fighting: "I had no idea about homelessness or homeless shelters. In Germany, if you do see a homeless person, you automatically assume they are alcoholic. Here, the stereotype is mentally ill. I was prepared for the worst. So even when there are women fighting and men yelling and you wonder what you're doing here, I have never felt like I was in danger. I've never been scared. It wasn't as bad as I imagined. If you know the clients, you know how to deal with them. But not everyone can work at DESC."

Her experience of being the boss came last Christmas when she offered to work since she wasn't going home. "It was just me, a supervisor and two on-call staff. Christmas is pretty quiet. Then the supervisor got sick and had to go home. So for about two hours, I was running one of the biggest shelters in Seattle, until the next shift started."

I realized how small the step to homelessness can be [in the United States]—one car accident where you can't pay the bills, and you are out on the street. In Germany, you can't be without medical insurance. *—Barbara Hahm*

Barbara finds some respite from the stress of her MVS assignment in unit life. "I was worried at first because it was a big unit—seven or eight people—all from different backgrounds. I thought there would be a lot of conflict about chores and different attitudes," she says.

Happily, it hasn't turned out that way, she says. "We are a really good unit. We are all introverts. I think that makes it easier to be more outgoing in the unit. But it's hard to make decisions. One time we went on the ferry [for a unit outing] and afterward we couldn't decide where to stop for dinner," she says. "So we ended up coming back to the unit house and ordering pizza."

Melanie Zuercher is news editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church. Barbara completed her one-year MVS term in September.

MVS photo

I went into social work because I've wanted to serve people all my life. You don't do social work for the money.

—Barbara Hahm

In our end is our beginning

The kingdom of God is larger than the sum total of its churches or institutions.

by David Greiser

My first pastorate after seminary was in a "mission" church in Grand Rapids, Mich. Like many such churches, North Park Mennonite Church perennially struggled with small numbers and small budgets. It was a fellowship that cared for marginal people, but it never seemed to grow. To paraphrase an expert in church systems, North Park did not grow and did not go away.

Mennonites surely know that God intended for churches to be planted as part of God's strategy in fulfilling the Great Commission. But I wonder, Is it also God's intention that churches live a certain span of life and then die?

> In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.
> —Hebrews 1:10-12

Then one day, it did go away. I was no longer on the scene. In fact, I was starting a new church in another city when the letter arrived in the mail. "You are invited to the last worship service of the North Park Mennonite Church. After more than 20 years of ministry, our church is closing its doors. Please come to our last service of worship, on Aug. 13, 1991. If you cannot be with us on that day, send a letter of reminiscence which we can read in the service."

The closing of North Park Church caused me to consider the purposes of God for the life span of a congregation. Mennonites surely know that God intended for churches to be planted as part of God's strategy in fulfilling the Great Commission. Well over 100 new churches were begun by General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church agencies from 1985 to 1995. But I wonder, Is it also God's intention that churches live a certain span of life and then die?

The preacher of the Book of Hebrews (the best guess of scholars is that Hebrews was a sermon before it took shape as a letter) pictured an all-encompassing view of God's providence in the world. Hebrews 1:10-12 speaks of Christ's activity at Creation, and places the end of the world under the same umbrella of Providence.

Jesus Christ, the preacher says, is eternal. His life and reign have no end. By contrast, everything created is temporal. Everything. Such a thought must have caused a sigh of relief among the church of the Hebrews, which had been suffering persecution at the hands of the local synagogue. The survival of their precarious little fellowship did not depend on them. Thomas Long, in his book *Hebrews, A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching* (John Knox, 1997), affirms the tradition that the sermon to the Hebrews came to a church that was tired—tired of suffering, tired of working, tired of seeing the attendance figures going down at church, tired enough of struggling to collectively drop its end of the rope and walk away from the faith. The preacher's words come as a welcome reprieve.

The alpha and omega: The preacher reminds these flagging disciples that created things—whether bodies, buildings or institutions—have both beginnings and endings. Ultimate responsibility for the closing lies no more completely on their sagging shoulders than it did for the beginning. Jesus Christ is eternal—the alpha and omega—and his reign has no end. The rest of created reality eventually resembles a pair of 8-year-old Nikes.

Such a viewpoint should come as a relief to the faithful who agonize over the declining attendance of their churches until finally sending out a letter of invitation to a last worship service. Such a viewpoint also serves as a sobering reminder to all builders and keepers of church institutions. "They will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up" (Hebrews 1:11-12).

The most famous congregations of the Christian church are now wispy memories. Whatever happened to the First Church of Jerusalem? What was the fate of that fascinating multicultural congregation in Antioch? Where are the Christian Fellowship of Rome, the Ephesus Worship Center and the Church of the Redeemer-Colossae today? What hap-

Created things—whether bodies, buildings or institutions—have both beginnings and endings. Jesus Christ is eternal—the alpha and omega—and his reign has no end. The rest of created reality eventually resembles a pair of 8-year-old Nikes.

pened to all those churches planted by the great church planter Paul?

The building of the great congregation Hagia Sophia in Constantinople—which at its zenith employed 80 priests and 150 deacons—is today a museum. The First Congregational Church of Northampton, Mass., in which the Great Awakening began in colonial New England, is now a bronze historical marker. The stark reality is that none of the churches founded by the early heroes of Christianity exists today. And the strong implication is that the College Mennonites, Christian Fellowships, and First Churches will one day meet a similar fate, "if the Lord tarries."

The work of integration: Church institutions are not exempt from the same fate. This reality lends an appropriate smallness to Mennonites' perspective on the work of integration. The series of articles in which these words are written is a celebration of beginnings, inspired by the beginning of a new publication, *The Mennonite*. The preacher of Hebrews hints that, given time, *The Mennonite* will go the way of *Gospel Herald*, the former *The Mennonite*, and the *Herald of Truth*, a predecessor to *Gospel Herald*.

I thought hard before I wrote back to my friends at North Park Church. Finally, I responded. I mused that the success of a church is not measured by its numbers as much as by its ministry to people. Since I was a church planter when I said that, I'm not sure how honest my response was. If I were writing today, I would add that the kingdom of God is larger than the sum total of its churches or institutions. Churches, magazines and denominations are not the kingdom of God—they are tools of the kingdom, instruments that the God of beginnings and endings uses to shape that future that lies beyond our wildest dreams.

Churches, magazines and denominations are not the kingdom of God—they are tools of the kingdom, instruments that the God of beginnings and endings uses to shape that future that lies beyond our wildest dreams.

David Greiser is co-pastor of Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church, and an overseer in the Franconia Mennonite Conference.

Committee recommends all current GC, MC, CMC congregations be members of new denomination

CHICAGO—Everybody in. That is the recommendation from a committee on membership in the new, integrated Mennonite Church.

In a deliberate attempt not to make homosexuality a test of membership, the committee is recommending that all congregations now belonging to the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) or Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) should automatically become members of the new church. It would then be up to each area conference to determine membership criteria for itself.

The committee, appointed by the GC, MC and CMC general boards, presented its recommended guidelines for membership in the new church at the Integration Committee's Sept. 25-26 meeting in Chicago. The recommendations will now go to the three general boards' joint meeting in November.

Others membership guidelines proposed by the Membership Committee include:

Congregations hold membership in the new Mennonite Church by being members of area conferences. There would be no provision for congregations to individually belong to the denomination without being members of an area conference, as is now the case in the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Each conference determine the criteria and process for membership by congregations. Conferences are encouraged to do so in consultation with other conferences and by taking into account such denominational statements as the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. "Even as we anticipate a variety of faithful understandings and practices among us, we strive for the unity to which our Lord calls us," the guidelines say.

Congregations hold membership in only one area conference. Congregations now affiliated with more than one would pick only one.

The guidelines' preamble says the recommendations are not intended to set "criteria for membership based on specific issues which are of current concern to the church, e.g., homosexuality."

"We took the step of saying there is a broader issue," said Membership Committee member Miriam Martin. "We wanted to move beyond this one issue to set in place a procedure."

But what if conferences don't agree? "Where there are disagreements, we need to reach understandings, including agreeing to disagree," said Helmut Harder, a member of both the Membership Committee and Integration Committee.

Lindsey Robinson, another member of the Integration Committee, wasn't convinced this was possible. "It will be very difficult for Lancaster Conference churches [to be part] of the new denomination if noncelibate homosexuals are accepted into membership," said Robinson, Lancaster staff member and pastor. "This makes the tent too big."

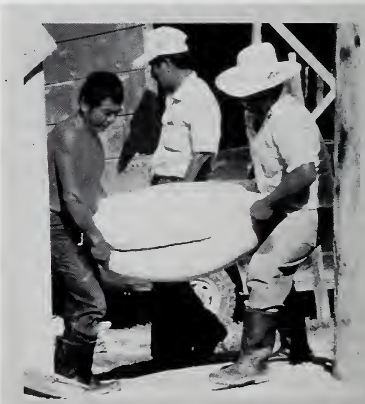
Integration Committee members also questioned the guideline for congregations to hold membership in only one area conference. Noting congregations with dual membership, Jim Schrag said, "We must remember there are loyalties that won't just go away with integration."—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Integration gets mission statement

Responding to repeated requests for more direction, the Integration Committee during its Sept. 25-26 meeting agreed to a mission statement for the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

The statement, which now goes to the three groups' general boards for approval, reads: "Mennonite Church—as a people of God rooted in Scripture, we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, follow him in everyday life, practice believer's baptism, work for peace and justice, call one another to discipleship and mutual caring and unite in witness to the world."

The committee agreed that a mission statement says "who we are and what we do." A vision statement says "what God is calling us to." For the latter, the committee recommended "Vision: Healing and Hope" as the vision statement for the new Mennonite Church. **—*J. Lorne Peachey***



MCC

Hit the sack

K'ekchi' workers in Guatemala unload sacks of food from Mennonite colonies in neighboring Belize. The K'ekchi', an indigenous people in Guatemala, have been hit by drought and fire, resulting in food shortages. The Belizian Mennonites, who have been helping construct an education center for the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church, responded with a donation of 100,000 pounds of corn, beans and rice.

Racial groups differ on place in church

Integration Committee struggles with anti-racist structures

CHICAGO—The Integration Committee's Sept. 25-26 meeting underscored two things: the importance of making the new church anti-racist and the complexities of doing so.

The committee first heard from a Damascus Road anti-racism team made up of Mennonite Church General Board representatives. Team member Miriam Martin told the committee, "When we talk about racism, whites tend to think about individual acts while people of color tend to think of systems."

Then the committee heard from people of color with concerns about what those systems might be in the new integrated church. But the input from representatives of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) racial ethnic groups highlighted the different perspectives of how the new church should be structured to address their concerns.

The MC associate groups, representing African-Americans, Hispanics and Native people, have assembly delegages and seats on the General Board. The GC groups, representing Hispanics, Native people and East Asians, do not have such automatic leadership representation but have staff working for them in the Commission on Home Ministries.

"We have been very vocal in asking to be included on MC boards, and the church has been very responsive," said Leslie Francisco III of the MC African-American Mennonite Association. "But now [with integration] there's an infusion of 50,000 more Anglos, making us a greater minority. … Our fear is that we will lose our ability to speak at the table."

Samuel Lopez of the MC Hispanic Mennonite Convention agreed. "At one point the Mennonite Church empowered the racial ethnic groups by giving us a voice, and now to take away that voice doesn't feel right," he said.

But Ramiro Hernandez of AMIGA, the GC Hispanic organization, offered another view. "We are not an associate group, we never have been an associate group, and we don't want to be one in the new denomination," he said. "We want the new church to deal with Spanish concerns in the overall structure."

Integration Committee member Jim Schrag noted that "different experiences have led to different ways of being included, but all have felt included. … So now the question is, 'How does that happen best in the new church?' "

Said committee co-chair John Murray: "This discussion makes me aware of my racism. I know that as a white male it really doesn't matter what kind of structure we come up with because I will be there. But that's not true for others, and that makes me very sad."

The committee also heard feedback from an integration consultation for staff and other church leaders held in Sioux Falls, S.D., Aug. 31-Sept. 4. As a result of a recommendation from the consultation, a group has been appointed to study the feasibility of creating a new management team to take over the details of integration.

"I find this all very confusing," said Integration Committee member Don Steelberg. "Nobody knows who's in charge any more. … If integration isn't working and needs to be fixed, then it is our responsibility [as the Integration Committee] to fix it."

Co-chair Dorothy Nickel Friesen was equally concerned, saying, "We need to acknowledge that if we keep moving [who's in charge], that's a way of excluding these [racial ethnic] groups."—*J. Lorne Peachey*

> We want the new church to deal with Spanish concerns in the overall structure.
>
> —*Ramiro Hernandez*

GC, MC to meet CMC in St. Louis

ST. LOUIS—The next churchwide convention has officially gotten bigger. St. Louis 99, originally billed as a joint convention of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, has added the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

CMC delegates have held separate sessions prior to the three previous joint GC-MC conventions. But in the integration process, CMC has become an equal participant with the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, which were previously merging "in consultation" with CMC.

St. Louis 99 will be held July 23-27, 1999, in the America's Center complex in downtown St. Louis with the theme "Come to the River." In addition to the GC, MC and CMC delegate sessions, there will be programs and activities for infants and toddlers, elementary-grade children, junior high youth, high school-age youth, young adults and adults. Some off-site trips are planned.

The junior high event is relatively new; the first one took place at the 1995 GC-MC convention in Wichita, Kan. Also in St. Louis, the young adult activities will be more extensive than at past conventions.

St. Louis 99 worship leaders will be Cynthia Neufeld Smith, associate pastor at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan.; Lawrence Hart, Mennonite minister from Clinton, Okla.; and Iris de Leon Hartshorn, director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries. Music leaders will be Wanda Mitchell, teacher from Hampton, Va.; Marilyn Houser Hamm, musician from Altona, Man.; and Ken Nafziger, music professor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.
—*GCMC News Service*

College, seminary enrollment down again

Enrollments: a comparison

	1997	1998
AMBS	211	173
Bethel	604	515
Bluffton	1,053	1,001
EMU	1,325	1,408
Goshen	1,016	1,045
Hesston	416	411
Total	4,625	4,553

For the third consecutive year, total enrollment has dropped at the U.S. General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) colleges and seminaries as only two schools reported gains in student numbers this fall. Figures from all six GC and MC schools show 4,553 students enrolled, down 72 students or 1.6 percent from last fall and down 2.6 percent from 1996.

The only gains in student numbers came from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Goshen (Ind.) College. With 1,408 undergraduate, graduate and seminary students, EMU posted a record enrollment for the fourth year in a row, up 6.3 percent over last fall. Goshen registered 1,045 students, a gain of 2.9 percent.

Enrollments dropped most dramatically at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Bethel College. AMBS, in Elkhart, Ind., reported 173 students, down 18 percent from last year's fall semester. Bethel, in North Newton, Kan., dropped 14.7 percent to 515 students, it smallest student body since the fall of 1972. Student numbers at Bluffton (Ohio) College fell 4.9 percent to 1,001 students, while Hesston (Kan.) College dipped 1.2 percent to 511 students.

The decline is "cause for concern; it's not cause for panic," says Dale Schrag, secretary of the GC Higher Education Council. "My hunch is there is a variety of factors, and these factors vary from institution to institution."

At Bethel, president Douglas Penner cites faculty and administration changes as possible factors in the decrease in enrollment. In the past year Bethel has named a new dean of enrollment services, director of admissions and head of the nursing department, the school's largest department. "We haven't come to any conclusions on this," Penner says.

During AMBS's 1997-98 academic year, fall enrollment of 211 dropped to 172 for the spring semester. Randall C. Miller, director of admissions and financial aid, says he expects the reverse to happen this year, although probably not to the same degree. "We have a lot of people who didn't come in the fall but will come in February," he says. "We're going to do better in the spring than we did last year."

Miller says spring numbers could increase by six to 10 students. "We work with the way people are being called," he says.

Schrag says he is confident that work being done by the Higher Education Council, Mennonite Board of Education and an education integration committee will turn the downward trend into a "temporary blip."

"I think the initiatives being considered ... will raise the profile of Mennonite colleges in the church," he says. "I'm not ready to cash in my optimism yet."—*Rich Preheim*

Mennonite Women unveils new symbol

The vine that is Christ is the featured element in the new symbol of Mennonite Women, designed by Judith Rempel Smucker of Akron, Pa. "In brainstorming sessions, we kept returning to the organic imagery suggested in John 15:5: 'I am the vine, you are the branches,' " says MW president Elizabeth Klassen.

Mennonite Women was formed in 1997 by the merger of Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church's Women's Missionary and Service Commission.—*GCMC News Service*

MDS plans long-term storm response in Puerto Rico

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Disaster Service anticipates at least six months of cleaning and rebuilding in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Georges' assault on the island Sept. 21. Puerto Rican Mennonites are now offering shelter to storm victims, including at the two Mennonite schools.

"You can point your finger anywhere on the island and you'll find destruction," says Julio Vincenty, MDS unit representative from Puerto Rico.

Georges has been described as the worst hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in 60 years. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has assigned MDS to work in the mountains surrounding Aibonito, in the eastern third of the island. The region includes areas of Mennonite concentration. Forty to 50 Mennonite families are without homes or roofs. Many of the homes were wood frame and could not withstand Georges' intense rain and wind. The storm has also rendered many roads impassable, which will slow response efforts, says MDS spokesperson Marisa Doncevic.

Volunteers for MDS's long-term project on the island will not be needed for several weeks, she says. More pressing needs are funds to purchase generators and four-wheel drive vehicles.

Among the shelters opened by the Puerto Rican Mennonites have been Academia Menonita, a Mennonite high school in San Juan, and Academia Menonita Betania, a Mennonite junior and senior high school in Aibonito. The Aibonito school suffered wind damage and lost its water supply.

"All the Mennonites in Puerto Rico are MDSers now because they are helping each other," Doncevic says.

MDS officials will also investigate possible hurricane responses on the U.S. mainland.
—*Rich Preheim with MCC News Service*

Kathleen Hayes

With the help of Mariangeles Urdaneda, an intern from Venezuela (right), Philadelphia Mennonite High School teacher Keena Thrush prepares for Spanish class. PMHS opened its doors last month to 56 students.

First urban Mennonite high school offers education, peacemaking and reconciliation

PHILADELPHIA—The church affiliation of the newest Christian school in the City of Brotherly Love isn't readily apparent by the people within its classrooms and offices. Of the 56 students at the new Philadelphia Mennonite High School (PMHS), only about 15 percent are Mennonite—and they come from African-American, Cambodian and Hispanic families. Not even the principal is Mennonite; she is an African-American Baptist.

Such are the dynamics for the first urban Mennonite high school in the United States.

The original vision for the school, which opened its doors Sept. 8, was to educate the growing number of Mennonite youth in the city. But PMHS, which defines itself as "a culturally diverse community of learners," has attracted other Christians as well as non-Christians wanting educational alternatives. The only requirement for admission is that students and their parents agree to live by the standards and values of the school, including emphases on education, peacemaking and racial reconciliation. "We are offering a service to the city," says former PMHS board co-chair Arbutus Sider. "Anyone is welcome."

Aschandah Lunsford, a PMHS 10th grader, last year attended one of Philadelphia's public schools. "There are better, smaller classes here," Lunsford says. "I'll be able to have better communication with my teachers."

The school, one of a handful of Christian high schools in the city, has four full-time teachers—all graduates of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., or Messiah College, a Brethren in Christ-affiliated school in Grantham, Pa. The goal is to eventually have 150 students. Tuition is $4,850 a year; financial assistance is available.

The school's board is accountable to the Philadelphia Mennonite Council, the organization of the city's 22 culturally diverse Mennonite congregations. The Philadelphia Mennonite community is made up of African-Americans, Chinese, Ethiopians, Filipinos, Indians, Vietnamese and other groups in addition to Anglo. An advisory council includes representatives from many of these congregations.

Each school day begins with Scripture reading and devotions in homeroom, followed by schoolwide chapel. Located in a former Ukrainian Catholic school building, PMHS is within walking distance of the Philadelphia Art Musuem, Franklin Institute and other educational attractions.

The school is the first in the city to adopt an alternative calendar of nine-week class sessions with two-week breaks plus July off. The calendar has proven successful in other cities, reducing teacher and student burnout, improving student achievement, reducing crime and decreasing dropout rates.

Barbara Moses was hired last December as the school's first principal. Her 30 years in the Philadelphia school system, as both a teacher and administrator, included multicultural urban curriculum development, and she is a certified conflict mediator. Moses is being mentored in Mennonite distinctives by Freeman Miller, a Philadelphia-area Lancaster Conference bishop, and she intends to become an affiliate member of a Mennonite congregation.

PMHS has its genesis in a dream of Luke Stoltzfus, a Lancaster bishop in Philadelphia and now retired. He had long wanted a Mennonite high school in the city. So in 1993, when Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School was exploring the creation of satellite schools in urban areas, Stoltzfus proposed starting one in Philadelphia. When LMHS decided a Philadelphia school had to be locally driven, the Philadelphia Mennonite Council ran with the idea, receiving significant support from Mennonite communities outside the metropolitan area.—*Kathleen Hayes*

> We are offering a service to the city. Anyone is welcome.
>
> —*Arbutus Sider*

Mennonite wheat legacy in the red

Russian Mennonites brought it with them some 125 years ago when they came to the United States. And the hard red winter wheat turned the Great Plains into the breadbasket of the world. But now the red has given way to white.

Red wheat continues to be used for flour for baking. But world markets and breeding programs now favor white. One reason is that the bran coating of red wheat gives a somewhat more bitter flavor and therefore is usually milled out. White wheat is also better suited for pasta.—*Associated Press*

Tackling integration theologically

AMBS symposium draws 33 scholars to discuss merger

ELKHART, Ind.—Spurred by calls for reflection on the theology and nature of the church, a group of scholars has become the latest to weigh in on the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Thirty-three theologians and church leaders met Sept. 19 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart for what was termed an "ecclesiology symposium."

"The church is working so hard at integration, focusing on mechanics and structures, there seems to be very little time to reflect theologically and ecclesiologically," AMBS president J. Nelson Kraybill said in opening the symposium, which was coordinated by the AMBS-affiliated Institute for Mennonite Studies.

One reason for the event, said Helmut Harder, Conference of Mennonites in Canada general secretary, was negative views of the one-denomination, two-country structure proposed for the new church. J. Denny Weaver, religion professor at Bluffton (Ohio) College, didn't mince words in his view of the plan. "Dividing along national boundaries will be harmful to the long-term faithfulness of the integrated Mennonite churches," he said.

Mennonites in both the United States and Canada need to help each other not forget that "the church is fundamentally different from the world," Weaver said. Canadian Mennonites can learn from the suspicion that U.S. Mennonites have about government, and U.S. Mennonites might observe how Canadian Mennonites participate in government and still maintain their identity.

Lois Barrett, executive secretary of the Commission on Home Ministries, Newton, Kan., said she is not yet convinced by arguments supporting separate U.S. and Canadian structures. "But God can use imperfect structures to accomplish the purposes of the kingdom," she said. "The present structures are not perfect, nor will the future that we are envisioning be perfect either."

While structures are important, they should not be what drives the church—or the church's unity—several people said. In his presentation, Gerald Shenk, professor of church and society at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., said: "What is it that really matters? We have far too often organized ourselves around differences that really do not matter much."

Mary Schertz, AMBS associate professor of New Testament, urged focusing the church's attention on its center, Jesus Christ.

Weaver wasn't convinced. "As long as we talk about the center but don't define it, everyone will agree," he said during a discussion session. "But as soon as we start to define the center, it gets scary. When we hit this one head on, we're not going to agree."

Of course not, said Daniel Schipani, AMBS professor of Christian education and personality. "We don't have one theology; that's impossible," he said. "We really need to discern and negotiate between several theologies, trusting the Spirit to make us one."

The symposium produced no conclusions or recommendations, although there was talk of holding a broad theological conference on the subject of the church in another year.

"The Mennonite church in North America is at a critical juncture," Kraybill said. "If there ever was a time for scholars and theologians to step in and do some hard work for the church, this is it."—*J. Lorne Peachey*

If there ever was a time for scholars and theologians to step in and do some hard work for the church, this is it.

—*J. Nelson Kraybill*

Closed congregation continues giving

What does a congregation do with the money it receives after it closes and sells its property? Cove Mennonite Fellowship in Woodbury, Pa., chose to continue to support Christian outreach. The congregation, which closed a year and a half ago, has sent $35,000 to Steve Wingfield Ministries, a Mennonite-affiliated evangelism program out of Harrisonburg, Va.; $35,000 to Mennonite Board of Missions; and $30,000 to Allegheny Conference for mission work and leadership programs.—*Allegheny Conference News*

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EASTERN MENNONITE SEMINARY
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Largest-ever YES group commissioned

LANCASTER, Pa.—Eighty young people entering Eastern Mennonite Missions' Youth Evangelism Service were commissioned Sept. 13, the largest YES group ever. Members will serve for five months to one year in 16 locations in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and Far East.

Also commissioned were two YES alumni teams of four members each. One team will spend six weeks in Asia, and one will travel the United States as a drama troupe.

"What you're doing is not a fad," said speaker James Krabill, Mennonite Board of Missions vice president for mission advocacy and communication. "This is the beginning of a lifetime journey of faithfulness."—*EMM News Service*

Mennonite World Conference peace study OK'd

STRASBOURG, France—The Mennonite World Conference Peace Council has received approval from the MWC executive committee for a study and discussion process on peace for the global Anabaptist family.

The six-year process emerged out of the 1997 MWC assembly in Calcutta where Peace Council participants called for further work on developing an understanding of peace theology and practice in MWC churches. At the council's next meeting, in Colombia in July 2000, members will consider the biblical and cultural foundations for peace and concrete practices of peace.

The MWC Peace Council is a forum for peace discussions. It meets every three years in conjunction with the MWC executive committee.—*MWC News Service*

Amish lend help to Mexican colony Mennonites

WINNIPEG—A group of Amish and Beachy Amish in the United States has loaned $350,000 to a conservative Mennonite colony in Mexico struggling due to persistent drought conditions. The loan has helped a group from the El Cuervo colony in northern Mexico move to the more arable region of Campeche state on the Gulf of Mexico. Those remaining at El Cuervo will receive electricity, thanks to the loan.

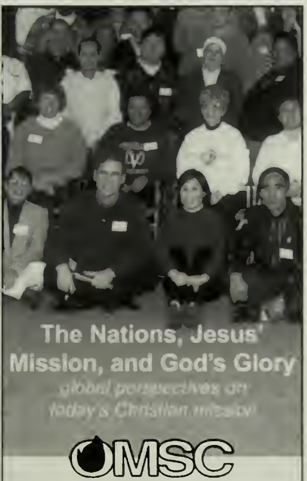
The relationship between the U.S. and Mexico groups started more than three years ago when Steve Yoder, a Beachy Amish bishop in Nappanee, Ind., received a letter from El Cuervo asking for a long-term loan to buy land.—*MCC Canada News Service*

Goshen College honors three alumni

GOSHEN, Ind.—The Goshen College Alumni Board has recognized three former students with Culture for Service Awards. Lester Hershey, class of 1936; Marjorie Schertz Liechty, class of 1953; and Elsie Eash Sutter, class of 1941, were honored Oct. 2 during the college's alumni weekend celebration.

Hershey, of Fort Ashby, W.Va., has been involved with outreach among Spanish-speaking people in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain, Chicago and Washington. Liechty, of Goshen, with her husband, Russ, has led Goshen College study-service terms to Nepal and China, served in India and worked at the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center. Sutter, of Goshen, has been an elementary school teacher and active church and community volunteer.

The Culture for Service awards are presented annually to individuals who have distinguished records of service and achievement at home and around the world.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Events

Business and Professional Women fall dinner meeting, Oct. 6, Mount Joy, Pa. Speaker: Diane Zimmerman Umble on "Holding the Line: The Telephone in Old Order Mennonite and Amish Life." Contact: Sandy Miller, 717-295-2333.

United Nations seminar, Oct. 7-10, New York. Sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee United Nations Liaison Office. Contact: MCC U.N. Liaison Office, 212-673-7970, nymcc@aol.com.

Workers

Bauman, Andrea, Souderton, Pa., is beginning a two-year assignment with Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) as a nurse in Dallas, Texas.

Bauman, Steve, Souderton, Pa., is beginning a two-year MVS assignment at the Dallas (Texas) Peace Center.

Burkhalter, Emily, Goshen, Ind., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment teaching English as a second language In Kansas City, Kan.

Classen, Suzanne, Newton, Kan., is beginning a two-year MVS assignment as a teacher in Washington.

Dubrick, Marija, Tiskilwa, Ill., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment as a medical assistant in Washington.

Eichelberger, Erin, Colorado Springs, Colo., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment with the Humane Society in Boulder, Colo.

Erb, Daniel, Lancaster, Pa., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment as a counselor in Seattle.

Freeburne, Andrea, Aberdeen, Idaho, is beginning a one-year MVS assignment with the Boys and Girls Club in Fresno, Calif.

Frey, Eric, Newton, Kan., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment with the Riverton (Man.) Fellowship Circle.

Graham, Erica, Kansas City, Kan., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment as a visual arts instructor in Fresno, Calif.

Janzen, Anna Stutzman, was installed Sept. 13 as youth minister at Warwick River Mennonite Church, Newport News, Va.

Knepp, Darla, Kalona, Iowa, is beginning a one-year MVS assignment as a computer literacy instructor in Chicago.

Koontz, Jennifer Scott, Newton, Kan., is beginning a two-year MVS assignment as a community and clinic worker in Hamilton, Ont.

Koontz, Matthew, Newton, Kan., is beginning a two-year MVS assignment as a community worker in Hamilton, Ont.

Lehman, Martha, Goshen, Ind., has been named Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) vice president for internal operations, Elkhart, Ind.

Leuz, Chris and Lois, Doylestown, Pa., are beginning two-year terms with the Commission on Overseas Mission and China Educational Exchange as medical teachers in China.

McCrae, Betsy Headrick, Akron, Pa., has been named Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) East Asia program director, Akron.

McCrae, Bruce, Akron, Pa., has been named MCC director of administration and resources, Akron.

Miller, Kendra, Versailles, Mo., is beginning an 18-month MVS assignment at a hospital in La Jara, Colo.

Myers, Dawn, Goshen, Ind., is beginning a two-year MVS assignment as an adoption placement facilitator in Winnipeg.

Rodman, James, Angola, Ind., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment as school mediation coordinator in Boulder, Colo.

Snavely, Gwen, Harrisonburg, Va., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment as a nurse in San Antonio, Texas.

Voth, Krista, Topeka, Kan., is beginning a one-year MVS assignment with Death Penalty Focus in San Francisco.

Yoder, Ronald E., Elkhart, Ind., has been named MBM vice president for global ministries, Elkhart.

Births

Andrews, Varick David Hardt, Aug. 21, to Scott Andrews and Mary Mae Hardt, Omaha, Neb.

Beckford, Ciaran Andrew High, Aug. 29, to Cheri (High) and Nigel Beckford, Pittsburgh.

Crawford, Lily Elias, Aug. 27, to Laurel (Elias) and Mark Crawford, Bondi, New South Wales, Australia.

Entz, Eric Jason, Aug. 22, to Ed and Kim Entz, Kitchener, Ont.

Hess, Kelly Janeen, Aug. 4, to Dan and Pat (Crabtree) Hess, Sterling, Ohio.

Holderman, Jacob William, Aug. 23, to Paul and Tina (Martin) Holderman, Chambersburg, Pa.

Jantzen, Sydney Rae, Sept. 3, to Dean and Kori (Eckert) Jantzen, Akron, Pa.

Kuch, Bailey Reese Gering, July 18, to Jennifer (Gering) and Ryan Kuch, Lind, Wash.

Kulm, Dustin Arthur, Aug. 21, to Beverly (Kagele) and Darrel Kulm, Lind, Wash.

Leid, Joshua Neil, July 1, to Colleen (Graybill) and Scott Leid, Narvon, Pa.

Lile, Jenna Marie, Sept. 4, to Janette (Duncan) and Jerry Lile, Harrisonburg, Va.

Livingston, Jordan Nicole, July 3, to Anne (Naffziger) and Tim Livingston, Peoria, Ill.

Martin, Austin Reid, Sept. 11, to Eric and Kristin (Hauder) Martin, Milford, Neb.

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Mast, Cosette JaneAnn and Yolanda ShaVonne (twins), Aug. 30, to Dale and Shari (Yoder) Mast, Harrisonburg, Va.
Mast, Jamie Lee, Aug. 30, to Annette (Grieser) and Ira Mast, Middlebury, Ind.
Miller, Lane Jeffrey, Sept. 8, to Heather (Hochstetler) and Tim Miller, Milford, Ind.
Moolenbeek, Laura Joy, Sept. 6, to Jenny (Shantz) and Willem Moolenbeek, Waterloo, Ont.
Morford-Oberst, Mario Leander, Sept. 13, to Achim and Jill (Morford) Oberst, Albuquerque, N.M.
Moyer, Jacob Tyler, Aug. 17, to Jeffrey and Stacey (Turock) Moyer, Souderton, Pa.
O'Krafka, Margaret Grace, Aug. 11, to Carolyn (Weber) and Harold O'Krafka, New Hamburg, Ont.
Paetkau, James William, Aug. 26, to Brenda (Sawatzky) and Don Paetkau, Goshen, Ind.
Pries, Noah Jacob Carr, Aug. 18, to David and Lisa Carr Pries, Waterloo, Ont.
Ramsdell, Anna Kathleen, Aug. 10, to Jack and Lori (Barth) Ramsdell, Lincoln, Neb.
Roth, Noah Benjamin, July 23, to Catherine (Sawula) and Dwight Roth, Edmonton.
Roth, Shalyn Rose, Sept. 11, to RoseMary (Zook) and Virgil Roth, Ryley, Alta.
Sell, Karlee Morgan, Sept. 12, to Kim (Zeigler) and Tom Sell, Souderton, Pa.
Short, Jonah Edward, Aug. 29, to Anthony and Cinamon (Brookmyer) Short, Toledo, Ohio.
Swartley, Taylor Alexandra, Sept. 3, to Michael and Sandy (Harris) Swartley, Dublin, Pa.
Troyer, Jared Dayton, Sept. 11, to Brenda (Miller) and Don Troyer, Louisville, Ohio.
Weber, Hannah Elizabeth, Aug. 20, to David and Heather (Derksen) Weber, St. Jacobs, Ont.
Yoder, Zachary Quinn, Sept. 17, to Rob and Sara (Mullins) Yoder, Middlebury, Ind.

Marriages

Bechtel/Sell: Travis Bechtel, Souderton, Pa., and Jennifer Sell, Souderton, Sept. 6, by Gerald Clemmer and David Greiser.
Benner/Wiggins: Kenneth Benner, Morgantown, Pa., and Carolyn Landis Wiggins, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 12, by Clyde Kratz.
Bisbort/Martin: Lois Bisbort, Alburtis, Pa., and Thomas Martin, Boyertown, Pa., Sept. 5, by Roy Yoder.
Cardona/Frankenfield: Ricardo Cardona, Lansdale, Pa., and Janeen Frankenfield, Telford, Pa., Aug. 15, by Gerald Clemmer.
Dyck/Veitch: Allan Dyck, Steinbach, Man., and Rebecca Veitch, St. Jacobs, Ont., Aug. 15, by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.
Eash/Kozlowski: Eydie Eash, Middlebury, Ind., and Tim Kozlowski, Middlebury, July 25, by Linford Martin.
Eash/Rush: Matthew Eash, Goshen, Ind., and Rachelle Rush, Goshen, Aug. 8, by Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau.
Eicher/Miller: Heather Eicher, Berne, Ind., and Kirk Miller, Akron, Pa., Aug. 8, by David Moser.
Emberton/Smith: Shana Emberton, Normal, Ill., and Joshua Smith, Hopedale, Ill., Sept. 5, by James Smith.
Erskine/Roberts: Poppy Dawn Erskine, Seattle, and Mark Roberts, Seattle, July 11.
Franzen/Sacks: Jackie Franzen, Lederach, Pa., and Barry Sacks, Lederach, Aug. 29, by James Longacre.
Gascho/Rempel: Hannah Gascho, Johnstown, Pa., and Marc Rempel, Newton, Kan., Aug. 22, by Erwin Rempel.
Greaser/Hough: Tom Greaser, Telford, Pa., and Wendy Hough, Telford, Sept. 20, by Gerald Clemmer.
Hampton/Sawula: Jared Hampton, Edmonton, and Brenda Sawula, Edmonton, Aug. 8, by Rawlin Falk.
Hess/Riggenbach: Brandon Hess, Sterling, Ohio, and Bethany Riggenbach, Wooster, Ohio, July 25, by Paul Conrad.
Hohenberger/Nussbaum: Megan Hohenberger, Orrville, Ohio, and Todd Nussbaum, Orrville, July 11, by James Powell.
Jones/Schrock: Ceci Jones, Schaumburg, Ill., and Anthony Schrock, Middlebury, Ind., Aug. 15, by Ruppert Lovely.
Kuper/Samborsky: Zorina Kuper, Edmonton, and Jim Samborsky, Edmonton, Aug. 27, by Jean Jacques Goulet.
Landis/Stout: Mindi Landis, Telford, Pa., and Bryan Stout, Telford, Sept. 12, by John Ehst.
Mayer/Zehr: Jeffrey Mayer, Lowville, N.Y., and Emily Zehr, Croghan, N.Y., Aug. 21, by Evan Zehr.
Overman/Zajdel: Andrew Overman, Pittsburgh, and Janet Zajdel, Pittsburgh, Sept. 19, by Michael Fike and Cameron Kaufman-Frey.
Raynard/Steinke: Barry Raynard, Edmonton, and Penny Steinke, Edmonton, Sept. 12, by Dale Reesor.
Ritchey/Wolgemuth: Kevin Ritchey, Memphis, Tenn., and Debra Wolgemuth, Memphis, Sept. 5, by Joe Sherer.
Ziegler/Zimmerly: Brian Ziegler, Dalton, Ohio, and Joy Zimmerly, Sterling, Ohio, July 18, by Terry Zimmerly.

Deaths

Belsly, Verna, 100, Washington, Ill., died Sept. 12. Burial: Sept. 15 at Deer Creek, Ill., by Verle Brubaker.
Bishop, Irene, 76, Perkasie, Pa., died Sept. 7. Burial: Sept. 11 at Blooming Glen, Pa., by Paul Brunner and David Stevens.
Brubaker, Ida Bare Shenk, 91, Lititz, Pa., died Sept. 4. Survivors: children Vera Shenk Hocker, Velma Shenk Ross; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 8 at Rohrerstown, Pa., by Karl Steffy, John Shenk and Donald Good.
Buller, Victor David, 81, Duluth, Minn., died Aug. 24. Survivors: wife, Lillian; children Mark, Paul, Lynn Kaplanian-Buller, Rachel Lewis; four grandchildren.

Burkholder, John, 95, Ephrata, Pa., died Sept. 12 of cancer. Survivors: children Marlin, John, Dorothy Sensenig, Mae Swan, Roy, Samuel, Lois Hostetter; 22 grandchildren, 68 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 15 at East Earl, Pa., by Earl Sensenig.

Delagrange, Henry, 86, Leo, Ind., died Sept. 9. Survivors: wife, Anna Barb; children Charles, Loretta Graber, Delores Fisher, Richard; 14 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 12 at Leo by Doug Zehr and Charles DeSanto.

Frey, Glenferd, 81, Archbold, Ohio, died July 26. Survivor: wife, Marjorie. Burial: July 29 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Dee Swartz.

Hartzler, Ruby Keller, 63, Roanoke, Ill., died Sept. 3 of cancer. Survivors: husband, Paul; son, David; two grandchildren. Burial Sept. 8 at Roanoke by Robert Nolt.

Hostetler, Leo, 92, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 4. Survivors: children Dwight, Keith, Merle, Bruce, Ardyth Steckly, Joyce Landgraf, Lorna Osborne; 17 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 8 at Harper, Kan., by Royce Vogt.

Jantze, Alberta DeWitt, 63, Milford, Neb., died Aug. 11. Survivors: husband, Maurice; children Vicky Reiss, Christy Scherbarth, Maurice, Marty; 12 grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 14 at Milford by Bob Troyer.

King, Floyd Yoder, 90, West Liberty, Ohio, died Sept. 5. Survivors: wife, Cleta; children Calvin, Walter, Wesley, Duane, Harlan; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 8 at West Liberty by Randy Reminder and Calvin King.

Leaman, Lewis, 54, Chambersburg, Pa., died Sept. 9 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Arlene; children Monica Kehr, Julette, Brent; mother, Evelyn Leaman. Burial: Sept. 13 at Chambersburg by Cleon Nyce and Ray Geigley.

Nyce, Gladys Sue, 54, Telford, Pa., died July 11 of lymphoma. Survivors: husband, John Sr.; children John Jr., Christopher, Joel; one grandchild. Burial: July 15 at Franconia, Pa., by John Ehst.

Regier, Marie Ediger, 88, Buhler, Kan., died Sept. 1. Survivors: husband, John; children Karen Gehring, Karlene Pauls, Betty Rich, Norma; nine grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 4 at Buhler by Robert Dalke.

Rohrer, Harold, 66, Leola, Pa., died Sept. 6 of leukemia. Survivors: wife, Erma; children Randy, Don, Perry, Donna Sauder; nine grandchildren; parents, Israel and Edna Rohrer. Burial: Sept. 10 at Leola by Calvin Yoder, Doug Kaufman and Lester Graybill.

Roth, Lloyd Ira, 87, Wayland, Iowa, died Sept. 7. Survivors: wife, Lula; children Donald; three grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 9 at Wayland by Ruben Chupp.

Sauder, Selma Gautsche, 85, Archbold, Ohio, died Sept. 10 of a stroke. Survivors: husband, Roy; children Virginia Frank, Joan Ozuzu, Eloise Miller, Arlene Horst, Robert, Duane, John, Wendell, Neil; 21 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 13 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Randy Nafziger and Charles Gautsche.

Shank, Anna Metzler, 77, Lititz, Pa., died Sept. 6. Survivors: husband, Luke; children Duane, Dottie, Debbie Miller, Dan; six grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 9 at Manheim, Pa., by Ron Adams, Dorcas Miller Lehman and Bonnie Stutzman.

Snyder, Nancy Martin, 47, Elmira, Ont., died Aug. 24 of cancer. Survivors: father, Henry; stepmother, Marcella. Burial: Aug. 27 at St. Jacobs, Ont., by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.

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classifieds

- **Lancaster Mennonite High School** has a 10-week teaching position in ***business/math*** beginning Nov. 2. Must be computer literate. Contact Miles Yoder at LMHS, 717-299-0436; fax 717-299-0823; email lmh@redrose.net.

- **New Holland Mennonite Church** is seeking a half-time ***associate pastor.*** If interested, send your resume to Mary Y. Rittenhouse, New Holland Mennonite Church, 18 Western Ave., New Holland, PA 17557.

- **Maplewood Mennonite Church,** Ft. Wayne, Ind., is seeking a ***senior pastor*** for its 180-member congregation. Candidates with strong preaching, teaching and administrative skills should send resumes to Robert Jones, Search Committee, 4129 Maplecrest Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46815.

- **Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center** is seeking a ***program director.*** This is a new Christian ministry position created to respond to the spiritual, physical and emotional needs for Christ in WCRC's constituency. Half-time, with opportunity to expand.

  Contact Jerry Markus, 757-566-2256; email wcrc@visi.net.

- **Eastern Mennonite University** seeks ***vice president for advancement,*** 12-month, full-time. Terminal doctorate or master's degree preferred. Skills in administration, fund-raising and marketing required. Application deadline: Nov. 1, 1998. EMU President's Office, 540-432-4100; lappj@emu.edu.

- **Heartland International, Inc.,** is interviewing for independent Conklin Company ***marketing representatives*** in Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Pennsylvania. Opportunity for promotion into sales management. Excellent commissions. We train. Agricultural or construction experience a plus.

  Send resume to Sales Manager, P.O. Box 6301, Lincoln, NE 68506.

- **Friendship Community,** Lancaster County, Pa., has ***program coordinator*** position available immediately. Responsibilities include coordinating residential program and supervising staff. Qualifications include degree in human services/education and two years experience with developmental disabilities.

  Call Denise Herr, 717-656-2466, for more information.

- **Kraybill Mennonite School,** Mount Joy, Pa., is accepting applications for a ***middle school (grades 6-8) teacher*** in music, language and some Bible, beginning January 1999.

  For more information and an application, contact John Weber, administrator, Kraybill Mennonite School, 598 Kraybill Church Road, Mount Joy, PA 17552; 717-653-5236; fax 717-653-7334.

- **Bahia Vista Mennonite Church,** Sarasota, Fla., is seeking resumes of people interested in serving as ***minister of youth and young adults.*** Other duties could include Christian education or evangelism.

  Candidates should submit their resume or letter of interest to A. Jerome Yoder, chair, Search Committee, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL 34232.

- **Menno Haven** needs a ***volunteer couple*** for its growing Illinois Mennonite Conference outdoor ministries center. One half of the work would be in maintenance and the other half would be in kitchen and housekeeping. The couple would share weekend hosting with other staff. Housing, food and insurance provided. Starting time ASAP, but negotiable. One-year term preferred.

  For more information, call Rod Detweiler, 800-636-6642, or email mennohav@theramp.net.

- **South Hutchinson Mennonite Church** (Kansas) seeks an ***associate pastor*** to join present staff consisting of lead pastor and youth pastor. Qualified candidates need to be energetic, spiritually mature and people-oriented, committed to church growth and community outreach. Pastoral training and related experience are required with emphasis on counseling ministries, teaching skills and facilitating small-group life and fellowship.

  For additional details, questions or application, contact Don Lind, search committee chair, 316-662-7201 or 316-663-4244; South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505.

classifieds

- **Belleville Mennonite School** needs an ***English teacher*** beginning Nov. 3, 1998. Please contact Ray Baker, Superintendent, P.O. Box 847, Belleville, PA 17004; 717-935-2184.

- **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center** has a unique ***opportunity for adults*** 18 and older, including retirees: volunteer positions to join the LMCC staff in hosting God's ministry with prayer, cooperation and hospitality. Laurelville is a 350-bed conference and retreat center on 200 acres, 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, Pa. Options: Maintenance or kitchen/dining hall. Monthly stipend and health insurance for year-long commitments.

  Contact Laurie Weaver, Rt. 5 Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666; 800-839-1021 (U.S.) or 724-423-2056; laurie@laurelville.org.

- **Menno-Hof** is accepting applications for ***volunteer host and hostess.*** Married couple preferred. Must enjoy meeting new people and sharing faith with visitors. Awareness of Anabaptist history helpful. Exciting ministry to thousands of visitors. Positions available Oct. 1, 1998, for one- or two-year term.

  Contact Tim Lichti at Menno-Hof, Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565; 219-768-4117.

- **Meadows Mennonite Home,** Chenoa, Ill., a church-sponsored, non-profit, 159-bed nursing home, needs an ***administrator.*** Long-term care administration experience necessary, salary commensurate with skills and experience. Requirements include strong communication skills, computer administration experience, and a history of developing programs that meet resident needs.

  Send resume to Robert O. Bertsche, CEO, Meadows Mennonite Retirement Community, RR 1 Box 310, Chenoa, IL 61726.

- **Warwick River Christian School, Inc.,** is seeking an ***administrator/principal,*** responsible for overall management of the elementary school and child-care center, beginning by August 1999. Qualifications: active member in a Mennonite church, strong commitment to Christ-centered education, at least five years teaching experience and/or administrative experience; master's in school administration preferred.

  Contact Gordon Zook before Oct. 31 at WRCS, 252 Lucas Creek Rd., Newport News, VA 23602; 757-874-4713; email wrcshool@livenet.net.

- **Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church** invites applications and resumes for a full-time ***leading minister.*** We are a General Conference congregation of some 500 members, situated 1 1/4 hour south of Winnipeg. Qualifications: Should show strength in team leadership, knowledge in Anabaptist foundations, and familiarity in Old and New Testament studies. This person should possess motivation, vision for both ministerial team and congregation, and skill in communications—speaking, listening and facilitating.

  Contact: Search Committee, c/o Peter Hildebrand, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; 204-324-8317; email aaront@mb.sympatico.ca.

- **Mennonite Central Committee** is urgently seeking applicants for the position of ***program coordinator for the Philadelphia service unit.*** All applicants must exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Qualifications include experience in urban settings and with cross-cultural constituent congregations, leadership skills, and commitment to the centrality of spiritual life in group and independent living situations.

  For more information, contact Dwight McFadden or Becky Stahly, MCC Human Resources, in Akron, Pa.; 717-859-1151; email inq@mcc.org.

- **Mennonite Central Committee** seeks applicants for the position of ***director of Middle East programs.*** This is a three-year assignment based in Winnipeg. All applicants must exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Qualifications include experience in the Middle East, understanding of Middle Eastern politics and churches, administrative and communication skills, and willingness to travel.

  For more information, contact Dwight McFadden or Becky Stahly, MCC Human Resources in Akron, Pa.; 717-859-1151; email inq@mcc.org. Applications due Dec. 18.

- **Mennonite Board of Missions** seeks the following:

  Staff associate in evangelism and church development needed to consult with conferences and congregations for church planting and ministry development. Must be an effective church leader, proven team leader and participant, able to discern, encourage and power, a communicator and strategist. Able to travel. Dynamic faith, passion for mission, commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist belief and practice, and understanding of Mennonite Church structures and integration issues are crucial.

  Program administrator for evangelism and church development needed immediately to coordinate program administration and direct financial processes. Qualifications include proven administrative ability, experience in budget development and management. Capable team leader and participant; organized and attentive to detail. Person should be committed to positive team relationships, a committed Christian and participate in a local congregation.

  Please contact Rachel L. Stoltzfus, Mennonite Board of Missions, P.O. Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515; 219-294-7523; rachells@mbm.org.

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Is church too safe a place?

by Marlin Birkey

The world is rapidly changing around us. Many changes have been warmly embraced because they have made our lives easier. I don't know any modern farmers who wish air conditioners had never been put in tractors and combines. Many of us wonder how we ever got along without microwaves.

But other changes have created anxiety, pulling us out of familiar patterns of behaving or thinking and facing us with the need to adjust to new ideas. Wouldn't it be wonderful if there were one arena of life where we were truly in control, where we could regulate the changes to fit our level of comfort?

Perhaps this is why many Christians, young and old, in expressing their hopes for the churches they attend, speak of their need for church to be a safe place, a place to feel secure, comfortable, at home; a place of refuge from the whirlwinds of change around them. If Monday through Saturday is anxious and uncertain, at least church on Sunday will be the same—familiar, predictable, comfortable. It is no secret that change in the church has been much slower paced than change in other areas of our lives. And we have enjoyed, and perhaps were sure we needed, this slower pace of change.

The problem with this need to regulate change in the church is that the God we worship has little interest in keeping things the same, except for the unchanging truths of the gospel. As I read the New Testament, I see a God who more often shakes things up than keeps things the same.

Jesus' healing of the man with the withered hand created quite a stir in the synagogue. The Holy Spirit shook things up in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. A formerly lame man walking and leaping and praising God in the temple caused a reaction that landed Peter and John and the other apostles in jail. In fact, God's resistance to human attempts to make him safe and predictable appear throughout the Bible. God is living and active, and most of the time when God shows up in human experience, the status quo is shattered rather than preserved. Or maybe God didn't know better than speaking to a Gentile named Cornelius, a Roman soldier at that.

Jesus' call for Christians to be salt and light is consistent with the view of God as a change-agent. Salt and light both create change, make an impact, interrupt the status quo. Things get shaken up when Christians come on the scene, or at least it ought to be that way. How much more when the presence and power of God invade the realm of human experience!

However, the desire to regulate God is powerful. Paul speaks in 2 Timothy 3:5 of those who hold to a form of godliness but deny its power. We deny God's power by leaving little room for God to act among us in ways we aren't accustomed to and comfortable with.

As I read the New Testament, I see a God who more often shakes things up than keeps things the same.

Our fear of change causes us to build invisible walls around God to preserve our level of comfort and keep us feeling safe. Being uncomfortable with things that are unpredictable, we try to factor our unpredictable God out of the equation.

Once in a while, from time to time, in one place or another, God breaks out of the box of our expectations. And it usually makes things messy. The desire for a nice little church where things are always predictable and no one is uncomfortable is shattered. God establishes once again the fact that he will not be regulated by human expectations. The only nice thing about this messy work of God's is that when it happens, some believers repent of their sin and coldness of heart, some unbelievers get saved, some wounded spirits and bodies get healed, some relationships are mended, some captives in various forms of prison are set free and the kingdom of God grows like the mustard seed that becomes a tree.

But surely we can afford to do without these things if it means remaining safe and secure in our churches. Or can we?

Marlin Birkey is pastor at Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

New title

What Mennonites Are Thinking, 1998, edited by Merle Good and Phyllis Pellman Good (Good Books, 1998, $11.95), is a collection of essays, poetry, fiction, humor and reviews by various Mennonite writers. Some of these writers have appeared in *The Mennonite*.

Pontius' Puddle

ALL RIGHT, GOD, WE ENGLISH SPEAKING CREATURES DEMAND TO KNOW IF WE'RE STILL YOUR FAVORITE CREATURES-- EVEN THOUGH OUR CHURCHES ARE DORMANT, WHILE THIRD WORLD CHURCHES EXPERIENCE RECORD GROWTH ?
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Rich Preheim

Another home run for racism

As a remarkable year in baseball enters the playoffs, it is time for a post-season pop quiz. If you have had any contact with the outside world in the last six weeks, this should be easy, even if RBI means Rosedale Bible Institute to you and not runs batted in.

So put down your *Sports Illustrated,* turn off ESPN and identify the following players:

1. Mark McGwire (I told you this would be easy. McGwire is, of course, the St. Louis first baseman who this year set a new major league record for home runs in a season with 70.)

2. Sammy Sosa (The Chicago Cubs outfielder also eclipsed the old home run record, engaging in a glorious duel with McGwire for the new mark before finishing with 67. Together, the two players became the only late-summer story to rival the White House perjury scandal for the media's attention.)

3. Roger Maris (He, of course, held the old record of 61 home runs in a season, set in 1961.)

4. Babe Ruth (The legendary slugger always pops up when home runs are the topic.)

Now just to make sure you passed, here is an extra-credit question: **Who was Josh Gibson?**

If you don't know, you are not alone. Many people don't, including knowledgeable baseball fans who can describe the infield fly rule and the difference between a screwball and slider. Those who are aware of Gibson haven't heard his name in the course of McGwire and Sosa's home run derby. And plenty of other names have been batted about. This season's assault on Maris' record has evoked recollections by media and fans about former big league stars such as Henry Aaron, Hank Greenberg, Mickey Mantle and Hack Wilson. Record-setting minor-leaguers who couldn't make it to the majors have again enjoyed a few moments in the sun as their feats are remembered. The spotlight has even shone on Sadaharo Oh, the Japanese home run king.

Meanwhile Gibson, who was called "the Black Babe Ruth," has remained largely ignored, proving that racism—particularly the institutional kind—is alive and well.

Gibson was one of the most feared hitters in the Negro Leagues during the 1930s and '40s, denied the chance to play in the "white" major leagues because of his skin color. There unfortunately isn't agreement on the magnitude of Gibson's accomplishments. Different sources report different numbers. He may have had seasons of 84, 75 and/or 69 home runs; his career total has been placed at 800 to nearly 1,000 home runs (Aaron holds the major league career record of 755). Nevertheless, there is no disputing that Gibson, who was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972, was a prodigious hitter.

The issue is not whether Gibson had more homers than McGwire or Sosa or Maris. That cannot be accurately and definitively determined. And even if it could, it might be comparing apples and oranges. Rather, the issue is that overlooking one of the greatest sluggers in baseball history perpetuates a disgraceful, sinful episode in American history.

And we are unquestionably overlooking Gibson. In a September survey of major U.S. newspapers, his name has appeared only 11 times in the previous month, compared to 135 times for Aaron, 105 times for Wilson and 60 times for Ruth.

The omission of Gibson's exploits is no doubt unintentional. Because he was deliberately kept from showcasing his abilities in baseball's grandest arenas 60 years ago, it is easy, almost automatic, to disregard him now at a time when he should be granted popular equal status with McGwire, Sosa and Ruth. But intentional or not, 51 years after his death, Gibson is still striking out against American culture. That is an ugly legacy of racism needing to be overcome.

This isn't just about Josh Gibson or baseball. This is about pursuing justice.

This, however, isn't just about Josh Gibson or baseball. There are countless other people of color in countless other fields who are similarly overlooked. This is about pursuing justice, elevating those who have been oppressed, dominated and subjugated by unholy powers.

The problems of racism in our culture are large, complex and deeply embedded, requiring imagination and inspiration if they are to be solved. Simply knowing Gibson's home run numbers doesn't go terribly far toward that end. But it's a start. As Moses said, "Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past" (Deuteronomy 32:7a). If we can't do even that, we will forever keep Josh Gibson from the big leagues.—*rp*

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the Mennonite

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baptized in the Lord

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Advocacy to government: pro and con

Wilma Ann Bailey has made a compelling argument for Christian advocacy to government ("Biblical and Theological Reasons for Advocacy to Government," Sept. 8 and 15). But she has overstated the case against passages like Romans 13 and 1 Timothy 2:1-2. That Paul was a Roman citizen didn't make him Rome's patsy. Luke also records cases of Roman corruption (Acts 24:24-26). Our prayers for governing officials and our obedience to the rule of law are part and parcel of our advocacy, thus combining our prophetic and priestly functions. In the spirit of Jesus and Thoreau, one can disobey evil rules and still uphold the rule of law if we are willing to submit to the law's consequences. I have a greater right to critique and advocate if I am also praying for the officials I am addressing.

Prayer also reminds me that government officials are multifaceted people, a mix of good, bad and confused like myself. This should protect us from the temptations of arrogance, judgmentalism and cutthroat partisanship, which are at the root of so much government malfeasance today.

Furthermore, the belief that Christ's return is imminent does not automatically render political advocacy moot and obsolete. Instead, I would hope that, on his return, Christ would find me at my post, praying, advocating and working for a better world for the future, regardless of how long that worldly future might be.—*Mathew Swora, Shoreview, Minn.*

I would like to respectfully disagree with Bailey as she tries to justify our advocacy to government. Israel had a physical inheritance that necessitated a political system but not until the people had rejected God's sovereignty. When they asked for a king, the Lord replied, "They have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel 8:7).

Christians are instructed that they have no place in politics: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you" (Matthew 20:25-26). The apostle Peter implores us to be "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11). Christians concerned with advocacy to government must ask themselves if any government would let foreigners (strangers and pilgrims) participate or interfere in its political process.

We are in the world but not of it (John 17:14-15), and our affections should be directed accordingly. "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth" (Colossians 3:2).—*Frank J. Desparrois Jr., Omaha, Neb.*

I found Bailey's series reiterating the tired old American saw, "You are either a citizen or you are a wimp; you are either active in politics or you are passive." There is a third option for believers. As citizens of the kingdom of God, we live in this world, not as members of it but as ambassadors to it, as Jonah did to the Ninevites. As ambassadors, we need to communicate to the world what it needs to know about the kingdom that is coming and that will destroy every government and authority on earth. We communicate the will of God, not compromised by politics or diplomacy. That is why we pray the Lord's Prayer—not to prepare us for battle in politics but to prepare us for the spiritual battle necessary for the new government which is coming.—*Steve Kimes, Portland, Ore.*

Counsel for conflict

After observing the Readers Say section of *The Mennonite* since its debut in February, I have noticed a recurring theme: that of anger and mistrust. General Conference Mennonite Church members and Mennonite Church members mistrust each other. Those supporting church membership of lesbians and gays and those who oppose it are angry with each other. And on top of this, more letters of criticism than letters of support have been written regarding *The Mennonite*.

As a senior at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., majoring in peace and justice studies and Bible and religion, I can't help but view this conflict with wry pessimism and a dose of scared frustration. How long before this conflict becomes an all-out war? I wonder how our Mennonite values of peace and justice play into it. While conflict, if addressed in a constructive manner, can potentially result in greater unity, I can't believe that a battle of words in the Readers Say section falls within the arena of constructive conflict management.

It's scary for me to realize that the aftermath of this present conflict is bound to fall heavily on the shoulders of my generation. Seeing how deeply rooted these issues of conflict are, I can only urge that we listen rather than blame, keep open hearts and open minds, and above all remember that we are dealing not only with issues but also with people.
—*Grace J. Duerksen, North Newton, Kan.*

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y readers say

Vision and boundaries

Thanks to Gerald W. Schlabach and *The Mennonite* for the two-part article on "The Case for Conference Authority" (Sept. 15 and 22). The historical background and sociological insights were quite helpful. While I have appreciated Readers Say letters on the subject, this longer article offers especially clear and thoughtful grist for our discussion mill.

I was struck by the wisdom of the phrase "Christian communities need both a clear vision of purpose at their center and a clear sense of the edges beyond which actions are no longer compatible with that vision" (Sept. 22). Interesting to find this thought in the same issue where denominational leaders were being admonished for "a lack of vision or 'a compelling, motivating and widely shared strategic intent' " in regards to integration ("Mid-course Corrections Urged for Merger"). Perhaps when "the vision thing" comes together more clearly, "boundary maintenance" will as well.—*Randy J. Roth, Des Moines, Iowa*

Release from bondage

I found J. Lorne Peachey's editorial "Pardon Our Iniquity and Our Sin" (Sept. 15) to be very disturbing. In it you plead guilty to some of the sins listed in Romans 1 and 1 Corinthians 5. Whatever your sins may be, since you say you confess them every day, I assume that you either commit them every day or you don't have the confidence that God truly forgives.

Why must we have an attitude of being in such bondage to sin? A Spirit-filled person walks in the newness of life and is no longer enslaved by the desires of the flesh and its legalistic-inspired feelings of guilt. Can we get over this unnecessary self-flagellation and truly celebrate our victory in Christ?—*Harley Hofstetter, Dalton, Ohio*

Cover photo by Fidele Lumeya, MCC News Service

Please stop the paper

As a pastor of a relatively small urban Mennonite congregation, I am amazed by the amount of mailings the church receives each week. A significant percentage arrives from the various Mennonite agencies, institutions and conferences. I cry out, "Please stop the paper!" This is not only an issue about resource stewardship but information stewardship as well.

I have committed myself to contact every Mennonite agency, institution and conference our church affiliates with and encourage them to do four things: 1) Reduce the volume of their mailings. 2) Be more thoughtful about how mailings are designed, giving as much attention to paper usage and information overload as to whether it is attractive to the eye. For example, summary sheets could be developed from which congregations could request additional information if interested. 3) Coordinate communication with other agencies before sending mailings in order to compact volume and reduce duplication. 4) Make greater use of nonpaper forms of communication, like web pages and email.—*Gary Daught, Tucson, Ariz.*

Taxes, tithing and taking up the cross

I was distressed and disappointed in reading James Faul's letter (Readers Say, Sept. 15). I was disappointed that you would allow yourself to become a forum for a highly biased view that stretches the Christian imagination, brings little substance to the reader and presents a political statement into a spiritual environment.

As an evangelical entrepreneur, I welcome any opportunity to pay less taxes. I do not look at it as giving the wealthy a tax cut; I see it as having a smaller quarterly contribution. Our entire tax system is confiscatory. Taking up the cross to follow Jesus does not mean that I am against tax cuts or Bill Gates or am for 2.46 percent tithing.

I think Jesus must weep for his family here on earth but more for the time we consume pointing fingers at each other.—*Don Hall, Johnstown, Pa.*

Spanish contribution

This comes in response to the sidebar to the story on Dennis and Connie Byler, missionaries to Spain ("Evangelism Plus Peace Plus Service Plus …" Sept. 22). You have done a disservice to readers by ignoring the work done by Mennonite Relief Committee during the time of the Spanish Revolution, 1937 to 1941. Levi C. Hartzler, D. Parke Lantz, Lester Hershey, Clarence Fretz, H. Ernest Bennett and Wilbert Nafziger were involved in that relief effort, distributing clothing contributed by Mennonites and food from Quaker sources. —*Boyd Nelson, Goshen, Ind.*

Constructive criticism

We are enjoying *The Mennonite*'s new look and lively conversations. We concur with other readers that a good Bible study would be a useful addition. And to have a verse on the cover such as on the old *The Mennonite* —"No other foundation …"—would be a welcome addition. Keep up the good work.—*Tom and Kay Fleming, Parnell, Iowa*

As another reader who has been disappointed with the prominence of news articles over Scripture-based articles in *The Mennonite,* I find that it helps to read the magazine from back to front.—*Karen Becker, Hyde Park, N.Y.*

Living above desires

To those involved in homosexual practices: You who have intense desires for such relationships and God has not seen fit to deliver you from them, would you consider that he wants you to live above those desires and bring he more glory than if he would take those desires away? We are all called to live above the tendencies to disobey in some manner.—*Glen I. Birky, Detroit Lakes, Minn.*

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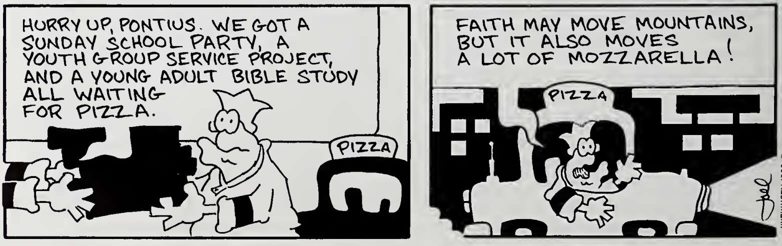
Pontius' Puddle

by Joel Kauffmann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The community of the almost

Are baptism and/or membership basically for arrivers or seekers? How much do you have to have finished before you can belong?

by David Stevens

I have been privileged to baptize a number of people in my ministry. There is a story behind each person. And each of the stories is as unique as the individuals. One of those was Danielle Beardsley. She wanted to be baptized so much her parents came to me. They said, "She seems sincere, but don't you think she's a little young?" Danielle was 9.

I said, "Let me talk to her."

Danielle and I met for six sessions in preparation for baptism. On Easter Sunday she stepped into the pool in front of First Baptist Church, Salem, N.J. She looked like a small angel in her white wading gown with fishing sinkers sown into the hem. Underneath I saw the hot pink and phosphorescent orange bathing suit. Because of her height, Danielle stood on a cinder block placed underneath the water, courtesy of her grandfather. Even as Jesus rose from the dead, that day Danielle rose up out of the water to walk in newness of life.

In a community of Christian nurture, discipling happens almost from the time we are born, in our Sunday school classes and the other modeling we witness.

The oldest person I baptized was Ted Wilson. Ted had been a faithful attender at First Baptist for over 60 years but had never been baptized or joined the church. His wife had been a member all those years, but not Ted. He had been asked many times, but he always said no. He never gave a reason. People speculated what his reason might be.

I visited Ted one afternoon. We chatted for a while, then I said, "Ted, I want to ask you something I know you've been asked before. If you're tired of being asked, tell me to shut up and hit the road."

Ted started crying. I apologized. He composed himself, then said, "I need to tell you why I can't be baptized. When I was a boy, my mother was swept away in a flood right in front of me. I saw her head go under the water, and I never saw her again. Ever since then I've been terrified of water. I can't bear the thought of going under water. I hope the Lord won't think less of me, but I just can't be baptized." He cried some more.

Finally I said, "How would you feel about just stepping into the pool and having a little water poured over your head. No immersion, just pouring. Would you permit me to tell your story to the deacons and offer this other way?" Ted said yes.

Tongues of fire: On another Easter Sunday, Ted, 81 years old, stepped into that pool. Waiting for him was a pitcher of water. I said to the congregation, "Just as the prophet Joel foresaw the day when God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh, and just as God's Spirit was poured out like tongues of fire on the early church, so we pour this water on Ted to symbolize God's outpouring of grace and empowerment on his life."

I turned and said to my friend, "Ted, on the basis of your confession of faith, in the presence of God and these fellow disciples, and in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." And I took that pitcher and poured a small amount of water over Ted's forehead. The droplets of water glistened in his gray hair, then dripped down into his eyes and mingled with his tears, tears of joy and tears of release. Those droplets washed away an awful memory 75 years old, washed away a lifetime of fear and guilt. And I tell you, there was no happier man on earth that day. It was indeed a resurrection Sunday.

Many times I have heard this story: "My baptism wasn't much of a spiritual experience. I was in high school and there was pressure to be baptized, so I went along with everybody else." On a few occasions I have baptized people who had experienced some dramatic change in their lives. But far more often those baptized have experienced a gradual maturing of faith and coming to commitment.

In a community of Christian nurture, discipling happens almost from the time we are born, in our Sunday school classes and the other modeling we witness. Most of our children feel Christian from a young age. They can't remember being any different. And we adults waffle. Sometimes we talk to kids like

Margo Maust Jantzi (for illustration only)

they are Christians; other times we talk to them like they aren't yet. There is truth to the becoming and truth to the not yet.

For a person who is the product of lifelong Christian nurture, baptism may feel like a confirmation of what they have always strived to be, not a dramatic break with a wretched past. Putting on the new self is true in the sense of putting on the fully participating and accountable self. The training wheels are off. It's time to peddle on one's own.

For most Mennonites, baptism has also marked the beginning of official church membership. The combination of baptism and church membership raises questions about the meaning of both. Are baptism and/or membership basically for arrivers or seekers? How much do you have to have finished before you can belong?

Open space or fenced yard?: Whatever entrance requirements the church prescribes to ensure a core of belief and the purity of the body cannot require that the work of God in the life of the believer is finished. People need room to move, and the Spirit needs room to work. But we also know there are boundaries to how much we should move. So we navigate between the identity of the church as open space and the church as a fenced yard.

The more I look at baptism in the New Testament, whether from the perspective of John the Baptist or Paul the Apostle, the more I arrive at one basic question: Are people baptized into turning their life around, or do they turn their life around in order to be baptized?

The real people we meet during pastoral occasions, like baptism-church membership exploration classes, never fit neatly into our psychological or theological expectations of the developing believer. And it is the Holy Spirit who ripens the fruit of the church in its season.

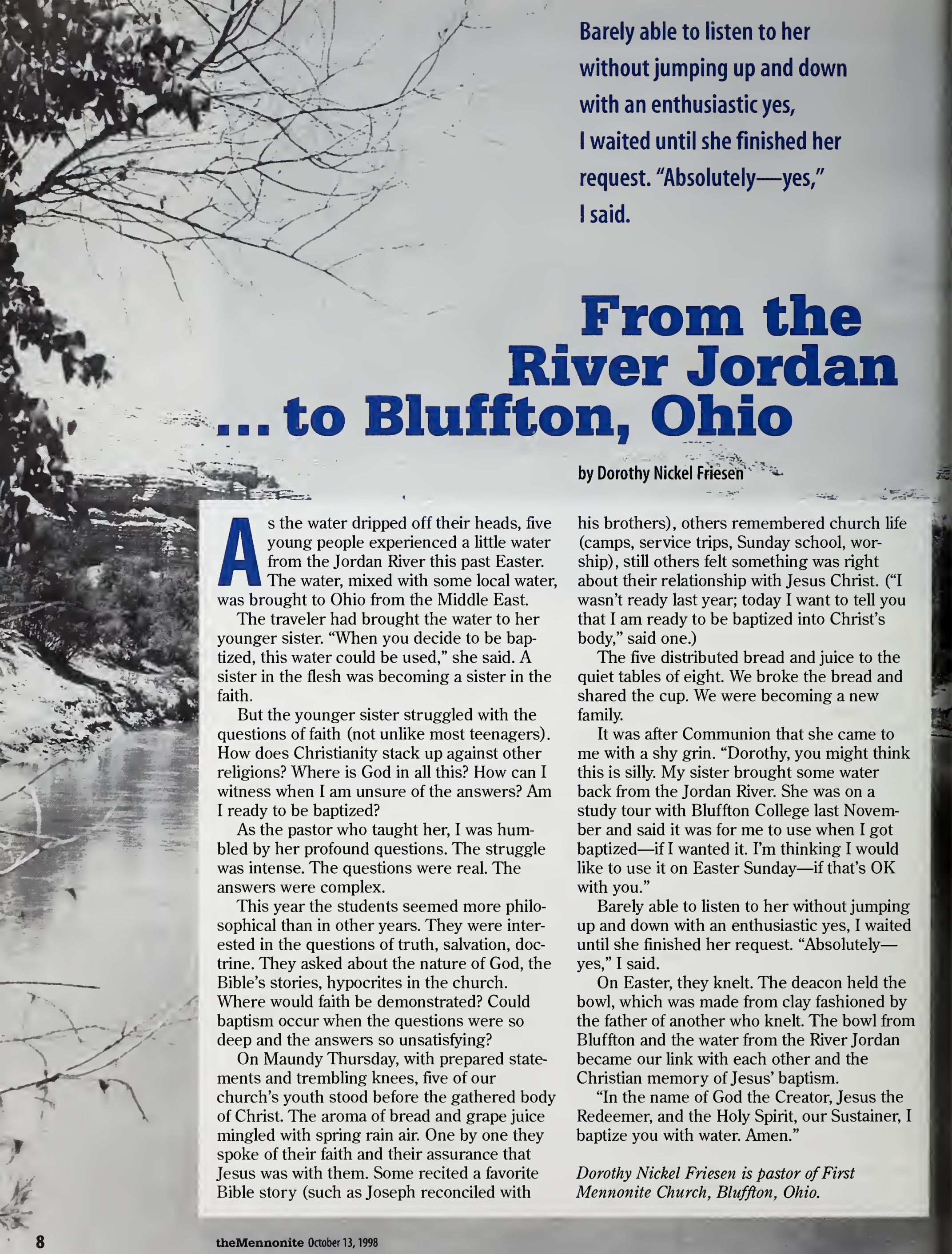
Read Acts 8:27-39. What is so captivating in this story is the approach to the possibility of baptism taken by the Ethiopian treasurer: "Here is water. What is to prevent me?"

He does not ask Philip, "Am I ready?" but, "Can you think of any reason why I'm not ready?" The emphasis is crucial. Once there is belief, readiness for baptism is assumed. The burden of proof does not lie with readiness but with delay. The message of this passage is that the way to baptism is open unless proven closed.

We are baptized at a point in time, but we will not stay where we are, temporally, theologically or otherwise. We will change. You and I are forever the community of the almost, the becoming community.

David Stevens is pastor of Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Are people baptized into turning their life around, or do they turn their life around in order to be baptized?



Barely able to listen to her without jumping up and down with an enthusiastic yes, I waited until she finished her request. "Absolutely—yes," I said.

From the River Jordan ... to Bluffton, Ohio

by Dorothy Nickel Friesen

As the water dripped off their heads, five young people experienced a little water from the Jordan River this past Easter. The water, mixed with some local water, was brought to Ohio from the Middle East.

The traveler had brought the water to her younger sister. "When you decide to be baptized, this water could be used," she said. A sister in the flesh was becoming a sister in the faith.

But the younger sister struggled with the questions of faith (not unlike most teenagers). How does Christianity stack up against other religions? Where is God in all this? How can I witness when I am unsure of the answers? Am I ready to be baptized?

As the pastor who taught her, I was humbled by her profound questions. The struggle was intense. The questions were real. The answers were complex.

This year the students seemed more philosophical than in other years. They were interested in the questions of truth, salvation, doctrine. They asked about the nature of God, the Bible's stories, hypocrites in the church. Where would faith be demonstrated? Could baptism occur when the questions were so deep and the answers so unsatisfying?

On Maundy Thursday, with prepared statements and trembling knees, five of our church's youth stood before the gathered body of Christ. The aroma of bread and grape juice mingled with spring rain air. One by one they spoke of their faith and their assurance that Jesus was with them. Some recited a favorite Bible story (such as Joseph reconciled with his brothers), others remembered church life (camps, service trips, Sunday school, worship), still others felt something was right about their relationship with Jesus Christ. ("I wasn't ready last year; today I want to tell you that I am ready to be baptized into Christ's body," said one.)

The five distributed bread and juice to the quiet tables of eight. We broke the bread and shared the cup. We were becoming a new family.

It was after Communion that she came to me with a shy grin. "Dorothy, you might think this is silly. My sister brought some water back from the Jordan River. She was on a study tour with Bluffton College last November and said it was for me to use when I got baptized—if I wanted it. I'm thinking I would like to use it on Easter Sunday—if that's OK with you."

Barely able to listen to her without jumping up and down with an enthusiastic yes, I waited until she finished her request. "Absolutely—yes," I said.

On Easter, they knelt. The deacon held the bowl, which was made from clay fashioned by the father of another who knelt. The bowl from Bluffton and the water from the River Jordan became our link with each other and the Christian memory of Jesus' baptism.

"In the name of God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, our Sustainer, I baptize you with water. Amen."

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is pastor of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

Carried to church on a chair

A missionary nurse learns to receive from those she helps.

by Jeanette Nisly

They had come the entire way from North America to help the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church, and I was determined to take this work team to a K'ekchi' service. My broken leg would not slow us down. But half an hour later, as we inched along the dirt path—my crutches sinking deep into the soft soil—I asked myself, "What on earth was I thinking?"

Getting to most of the K'ekchi' Mennonite churches in northern Guatemala requires at least a small hike from the main road, but I had decided to take this work team to a church just off the main road so I wouldn't have to walk too far. When we arrived at the church, we discovered the service was being held in someone's house. I said we should go for it. After all, how bad could it be?

The trail was steep and rocky. Finally, I had to admit there was no way I could make it on crutches. Sending the group ahead, I waited along the trail for them to return. As I sat there feeling sorry for myself and frustrated by my lack of independence, two K'ekchi' men showed up with a chair and a rope.

I had heard about them carrying sick people that way, but I wasn't sure I wanted to volunteer. It's one thing to slip and fall trying to walk on my own; it's another thing to fall off a chair strapped to someone's back.

I knew the K'ekchi' man who wanted to carry me. Ernesto and his wife had brought their daughter to the clinic where I was working. The mother was sick and malnourished. The month-old baby weighed less than four pounds. I taught them how to make formula and sterilize bottles until the mother's nutritional level improved so that she could breastfeed again. I later found out they named the baby after me; little Jeanette is now 1 year old and weighs about 20 pounds.

As I looked at Ernesto, I felt bad about this campesino carrying me to a church service I really didn't have to attend. But if I refused, I would deny him the chance to return the help I had once given his family. Ernesto trusted me when I told him what needed to be done to save his daughter. Couldn't I trust him to take me over this trail he had walked thousands of times?

Reluctantly, I sat down and let them tie me to a chair. They ran a rope around the chair, Ernesto placed the rope over his head, and we were off. What a sight! This slight K'ekchi' man carrying a "gringa" with a broken leg. Usually they carry sick people out of, not into, communities like that.

As we arrived at the house where church was being held, I struggled into the house with as much dignity as I could muster after being carried over the mountain.

When they asked me to share during the service, I stood up and turned to face my K'ekchi' brothers and sisters, and I began to cry. I was humbled to see how honored they were that I had come all the way out to their church service with my broken leg, even though I had to be carried there. I realized that any of those men would have done the same thing for me, with happiness in their hearts, because of their appreciation for the work we do here.

> **I was humbled to see how honored they were that I had come all the way out to their church service with my broken leg, even though I had to be carried there. I realized that any of those men would have done the same thing for me, with happiness in their hearts, because of their appreciation for the work we do here.**

I tried to explain how hard it's been for me the past month to be dependent and to have to ask for help all the time. I consider myself a strong, independent person, and it's hard for me to be on the receiving end instead of the giving end. This experience was a good reminder to me that my health and strength are gifts from God, and that part of my task here is to learn and receive from my K'ekchi' brothers and sisters. Though it was humbling for me to have to be carried by Ernesto, the giving and receiving that takes place through these kinds of experiences restores mutuality in relationships.

Jeanette Nisly is an Eastern Mennonite Missions worker serving as a nurse with the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church in Guatemala. She broke her leg in a motorcycle accident.

Centuries after Reformation wounds, Catholics and Mennonites to discuss healing

STRASBOURG, France—Nearly 500 years after they separated, Mennonites and Roman Catholics will be sitting down together to talk.

"Toward a Healing of the Memories" is the name of a dialogue scheduled for Oct. 14-18 in Strasbourg. The Mennonite delegation, appointed by Mennonite World Conference (MWC), will be led by Helmut Harder, a theologian and general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Other members will be Neal Blough from France, Mario Higueros from Guatemala, Andrea Lange from Germany, Howard J. Loewen from the United States, Nzash Lumeya from Congo and Larry Miller from France.

The Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity will appoint the Catholic representatives. The council's efforts are an extension of Catholic conversations with other churches begun under Vatican II.

Harder says the Strasbourg conversation will include an "examination of representative Catholic statements that contained charges against Anabaptists and their long-term effect on Catholic attitudes toward Anabaptists and Mennonites."

Consideration will be given to questions such as: How do we move toward a healing of memories? Who needs healing? What requires healing? Are the old wounds generating new ones? What will contribute to a better future attitude and relationship between Catholics and Mennonites? Also on the agenda will be whether there should be additional meetings.

"It is necessary to converse as Christians," says Miller, MWC executive secretary. "Honest conversation between Christians is not an option we might choose but a biblical imperative we want to obey."

In a number of parts of the world, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ live as minorities in large Catholic majorities. In many of these areas, Miller says, there is significant interaction between the two groups. "An increasing number of these relationships are developing in congenial and mutually beneficial ways, but others remain conflictual," he says.

There already has been some interaction between Catholics and Mennonites. A representative from the Vatican was an observer at MWC's 1997 world assembly in Calcutta. *—Marshall V. King of MWC News Service*

It is necessary to converse as Christians.

—Larry Miller

Michiana sale quilt sells for $12,250

When the bidding stopped, the applause started: A quilt had just been sold for $12,250 at the Michiana Mennonite Relief Sale Sept. 26 in Goshen, Ind.

The price was possibly the highest ever paid for a Michiana sale quilt, says Elsie Miller, chair of the sale's quilt committee. The quilt was made by members of First Mennonite Church in Berne and had been entered in a national quilt contest before being donated to the sale.

The sale generated $588,626, a new Michiana record, topping the three-year-old mark of $571,483. The bulk of the proceeds will go to Mennonite Central Committee.—*Elkhart Truth*

Boards seek church's 'missional identity'

GOSHEN, Ind.—The boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) mission agencies have called for assistance in determining the "missional identity" of the integrated church.

The GC Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) and Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and the MC Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) have asked the Integration Committee to convene the Mission Integration Task Force to serve as a steering committee. The task force, with representatives from a variety of mission agencies, has not been called to meet for several years.

The task force would "lead the process of defining missional identity for the new denomination, strategic planning for missions and defining new structural alternatives," according to the proposal made at the boards' Sept. 24-26 meeting in Goshen.

A joint executive committee, made up of the CHM, COM and MBM executive committees, approved a plan for a consultation to gather input on the church's missional identity. The consultation will include about 100 people such as congregational and area conference mission committee representatives, mission workers, agency staff and board members.

The Goshen meeting was the first joint gathering of the three agencies' boards since their March meeting in Newton, Kan., where they agreed to "act as one."

The meeting also included a presentation from Wilbert Shenk, former MBM vice president and now professor of mission history and contemporary culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif. He called for new approaches to overseas mission work.

Said Shenk, "The success of the last 100 years … does not give us a blueprint for the next 50 years."*—Tom Price of MBM and GCMC news services*

Peacemakers focus on economic justice

Issue challenges activists and other North Americans

NORTH MANCHESTER, Ind.—The irony was not lost on organizers: more than 200 peace activists piling into cars and driving 30 miles for a protest during a conference dedicated in large part to undoing the wastefulness of American culture.

Each Christian Peacemaker Congress, sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and New Call to Peacemaking, includes a public demonstration to spread an anti-violence message. During this year's congress, held Sept. 25-27, that action was at Sen. Richard Lugar's (R-Ind.) office in Fort Wayne to call for an end to the demolition of Palestinian homes in the West Bank.

Organizer Rich Meyer said he and other planners had hoped to conduct an action within walking distance of the farm near North Manchester where the congress was held. But in the end they decided that the potential benefits of a high-profile protest in an urban center outweighed the desire to use less gas.

While the group's Fort Wayne action highlighted concerns halfway around the world, the weekend conference, focusing on the theme "From Empire Economics to Jubilee Justice," stressed concerns much closer to home: economic disparity in North America. Participants said the roots of distant conflicts such as in the West Bank and Chiapas, Mexico, are directly traceable to North American consumerism—and that's a message the groups' North American constituents may not want to hear.

"Economic justice hits a little closer to our homes and pocketbooks than the problems CPT deals with most of the time," Meyer said.

The conference speaker, author Ched Myers, urged participants to build communities of dissent that live by different standards. "You can't be too rich in America, and of course the flip side of that is you can't be too poor," he said. "There's an infinite tolerance for wealth, and so there's an infinite tolerance for poverty."

Economic issues have been a CPT concern from its beginning but have not been emphasized until now. "This is something we've set aside," said CPT steering committee member Cliff Kindy, who hosted the conference at his home, seven-acre Joyfield Farm. "We've avoided talking about economic issues related to peace and justice work because it would be hard to talk about in language our constituencies would understand."

Kindy and his family have worked at the connection between violence and economics for years. They have lived below the taxable income level for more than 25 years to avoid paying for the U.S. military. Consequently, they have developed a sustainable alternative lifestyle, supporting themselves on an organic farm with no irrigation and less than three acres under cultivation. Holding the congress at the Kindy farm enabled participants to experience one example of what a re-envisioned North American lifestyle can look like.

Larry Penner

Christian Peacemaker Congress participants pile rubble in front of Sen. Richard Lugar's (R-Ind.) office in Fort Wayne, Ind., on Sept. 25 to protest the demolition of Palestinian homes in the West Bank. The rubble pile includes pieces of former homes in Hebron, where Christian Peacemaker Teams maintains a presence.

Taking up economic questions has caused CPT to do some soul-searching. The organization has many unresolved practical financial issues such as providing health care for its workers and determining salary scales. But the questions go deeper as CPT begins to ask how it can merge a witness against North American materialism with its current acitivities against armed conflict overseas.

"CPT embodies action," Meyer said. "This conference is an example that CPT also needs to reflect. Witness against violence is a lot easier for us. It doesn't require the same introspection. Economic injustice is something we buy into, literally, every day."—*Larry Penner*

Activists demonstrate and the earth shakes

FORT WAYNE, Ind.—As more than 200 Christian Peacemaker Congress participants entered the Fort Wayne office building of Sen. Richard Lugar (R.-Ind.) on Sept. 25 to protest the demolition of Palestinian homes in the West Bank, the ground shook. The reason was not due to the peacemakers' presence but an earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale.

To call attention to the Palestinians' plight, demonstrators, many of whom had been to the West Bank, piled rubble in front of Lugar's office, read names of victims and told stories of people who lost their homes.—*Larry Penner*

Puerto Ricans reeling from Georges

MCC to aid victims in Dominican Republic, Haiti

A new Mennonite church building was among the victims when Hurricane Georges pounded Puerto Rico Sept. 21. The building, home to a small but growing congregation near Aibonito, was swept away by the storm's high winds.

Georges' eye went through Aibonito, also destroying one building and ripping half the roof off a classroom building on the Academia Menonita Betania junior and senior high school campus. The school's water line was also cut during the storm. Fifty to 60 people left homeless by the hurricane have taken shelter at the school.

Also damaged were a church and parsonage in Coamo, reported Ramon Bermudez, Puerto Rico Conference's representative to the Mennonite Church General Board, in a phone call to general board headquarters in Elkhart, Ind. Twelve members of Mennonite congregations in Coamo and Bauta Arriba lost their homes in the storm. A total of 40 to 50 Mennonite families on the island had their homes damaged.

The Puerto Rico Conference, which has 11 member congregations, is accepting contributions for food and emergency supplies for victims. Mennonite Disaster Service will send volunteers in mid-October to start a long-term project, estimated to last a minimum of six to eight months.

In the Dominican Republic, which was hardest hit by Georges, Mennonite Central Committee has responded to a request from the Dominican Mennonite Church for $25,000 in aid. MCC has also provided 4,500 pounds of canned meat.

MCC has contributed $40,000 for relief work in Haiti's Artibonite Valley and in Citi Soleil, a slum in the capital city of Port au Prince. MCC has workers in Haiti but not in the Dominican Republic. In Haiti, the locations of some MCC projects were among the hardest hit by the hurricane.

"In the Artibonite Valley in central Haiti, where we did community development, whole towns literally no longer exist," says Dan Wiens, MCC country representative in Haiti. "Much of the rice crop, a staple here, is gone." *—Rich Preheim with MCC News Service*

Congregation finds merger in cemetery

Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary is not sure where it will be worshiping in a year or two because it does not have its own facility. But while it looks for a permanent meeting place, it has acquired a permanent resting place, giving a new twist to integration.

Mountain View Mennonite Church, a Mennonite Church congregation, was formed in 1901 near High River, Alta., by Mennonites from Ontario. Land was soon donated for a church and a cemetery. The congregation has since died out, but the cemetery had remained the property of Northwest Conference. Seventy-two people are buried in the cemetery, the last in 1975.

But the cemetery has now been turned over to Trinity, a member of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, to use as its own. "In death our integration will be complete," says Trinity member Anne Warkentin Dyck. "Together we will rest in peace." *—Canadian Mennonite*

Like a mustard seed, new program starts small

BERNE, Ind.—The first eight young adults in a new short-term service and missions program were commissioned Sept. 20 at First Mennonite Church in Berne.

After three months of training this fall, the Great Lakes Discipleship Center in Fort Wayne, Ind., will send one four-person team to Burgos, Spain, to assist in a drug-rehabilitation program and another team to London to help in church planting and youth ministry.

The Great Lakes Discipleship Center is largely supported by local Mennonite congregations, area conferences, the Commission on Home Ministries and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM). The center's short-term program for young adults is called RAD for Reaching and Discipling.

The commissioning service officially opened the center. Also commissioned during the service were the center's four staff members.

"It's God moving," Mike Schneider, the center's board chair, told the participants. "We would have come here for three of you. We would have come here for one of you."

MBM photo by Tom Price

New RAD program workers (left to right) Kristi Amstutz of Pulaski, Iowa; Wes Kauffman of Jerome, Mich.; and Megan Lehman of Berne, Ind., participate in a time of praise during their Sept. 20 commissioning service.

Keynote speaker James Krabill, MBM vice president of mission advocacy and communication, compared the new program with Jesus' parable of the tiny mustard seed that grows into a large tree. "God wants us to remember that it's not our plan, it's his plan," Krabill said. "God wants to do it his way."

Schneider said he hopes the center to have 15 more RAD participants by February.*—Ann Graham Price for MBM News Service*

Delegation finds vibrant Cuban church

Believers say restrictions encourage faith in God

AKRON, PA.—Harriet Bicksler Sider could have been describing a Sunday-night worship service anywhere in Latin America.

"The church was a little building stuck between two other buildings," she recalls. "It was hot and they had the windows open. The sound system was booming. There was a Pentecostal flavor to this congregation."

But this particular service was in Cuba. Despite communism's historical antagonism toward Christianity, Bicksler says, "there was no attempt to keep things quiet and secret. Everything was wide open."

Bicksler, from Grantham, Pa., and a member of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. executive committee, was part of a nine-member delegation sent by the executive committee to meet Cuba's church leaders and witness the experiences of Cuba's people. What the group found during its Aug. 30-Sept. 7 visit was a poor country with a people strong in spirit.

Raul Suarez, a Baptist minister and director of the Martin Luther King Center in Havana, told the delegation that during the 1980s, Fidel Castro began to loosen restrictions on religion. Suarez and Pablo Marichal, president of the Cuban Council of Churches, are today both members of the Cuban National Assembly. MCC supports both the Martin Luther King Center and the Cuban Council of Churches with grants for peacemaking activities.

The MCC delegation attended several Brethren in Christ (BIC) churches and two Mennonite house churches. A meeting with Mennonite house churches several hours outside of Havana introduced Ann Graber Hershberger, MCC U.S. board member from Linville, Va., to a vibrant body of believers anxious for expansion and expression in Cuba.

"The church is planning a rally at a nearby dance hall soon," Hershberger says. "This church remains unregistered, but it doesn't look to me as if this restricts them much."

Martin Shupack, who serves in the MCC U.S. Washington Office, says a BIC pastor told him that as many as 45 percent of Cubans "are now active, churchgoing believers, both Catholic and Protestant."

Adds Sam Resendez, an MCC U.S. board member from Del Rey, Calif.: "This is not to say Cuban people have a lot of religious freedom. They keep the service inside the church. They don't go out with religious tracts and Bibles. However, they do still enjoy many freedoms we have here in the United States."

Kay Ann Bontrager Singer, board member from Goshen, Ind., says the restrictions make the Cuban church strong. She said one churchgoer explained that the U.S. trade embargo makes life hard in Cuba, but it has also made Christians more faithful.

" 'If we didn't have the embargo, we would not have to depend on God as much,' she told me," Singer recalls. " 'Because things are hard,' she said, 'we must rely on God. If there was no embargo, things might become too easy, and accumulating wealth would replace our reliance on God.' "

The trip marked a new involvement in Cuba by MCC, says Don Steelberg, board member from Wichita, Kan. "MCC should continue saying to church people in North America that Cuba and the Cuban people are not our enemy," he says.

Willroy Grant will be a link in these efforts, Steelberg says. Grant, a student at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., accompanied the delegation to Cuba and stayed to work in conflict transformation training at the Martin Luther King Center. He will also be working with BIC and Mennonite groups.

"There are changes coming in Cuba, changes that have already begun," Steelberg says, "and we need to ask ourselves how we can facilitate those changes in a just and peaceful way."—*John M. Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

> **MCC should continue saying to church people in North America that Cuba and the Cuban people are not our enemy.**
>
> *—Don Steelberg*

End Cuban embargo, say MCC representatives

WASHINGTON—President John F. Kennedy imposed the Cuban trade embargo in 1961 as tensions mounted between the United States and the Soviet Union. Now, 38 years later, the embargo should be lifted, say members of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. delegation which visited the island nation Aug. 30-Sept. 7.

To advocate that position, five MCC U.S. executive committee members and three MCC staff members visited with aides to members of the House of Representatives' Agriculture Appropriations Committee, the offices of Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and the National Security Council.

"I feel we should not only be giving humanitarian aid but promoting sale of food to Cuba," Don Steelberg, board member from Wichita, Kan., told aides to Reps. Joseph Skeen (R-N.M.) and Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio). "The more difficult we make it for Cuba economically, the more difficult life is for the people of Cuba."

"We saw a lot of suffering," Sam Resendez, board member from Del Rey, Calif., told National Security Council officials.

But it appears no loosening of the embargo will be forthcoming. The House-Senate Agricultural Appropriations Conference Committee recently dropped an amendment that would have exempted the sale of food, medicine and medical equipment from the embargo. The amendment had passed in the Senate.—*John M. Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

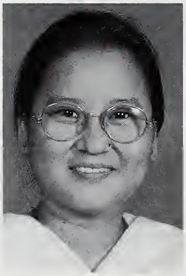
Calcutta woman runs MCC program that helped her out of poverty

Education is a wonderful gift from God.

—Ayesha Kader

AKRON, Pa.—Ayesha Kader's calloused hands remind her how far she has come and of the people who have contributed to her success.

Kader, who has worked in Mennonite Central Committee's office in Calcutta, India, for 18 years, runs MCC's Global Family program in the country. About 1,100 North American sponsors' monthly contributions of $15 each make it possible for more than 1,200 Indian students to attend school or vocational training courses. Global Family supports more than 2,000 children in about 20 countries.



Kader

Kader understands that in a personal way. "During my time of crisis, MCC helped me," she says. "I'm the fruit of this department's work."

Kader grew up in a poor family in Calcutta. They all lived together in one small room with no running water. It was Kader's job to carry heavy buckets of water from the standpipe down the street. The handles dug into her hands, leaving still-visible lines. When she finished school, Global Family helped her enroll in a typing and shorthand course. With these clerical skills, she was able to find an office job and help her family.

"Education is a wonderful gift from God," Kader says.

This is the attitude with which she runs Global Family. Students, with their parents, are regularly required to come to the MCC office to receive their tuition money.

"We want them to know who is sponsoring the children," Kader says. "We ask them to come with report cards so we can see the children's progress."

When students do poorly in school, Kader discusses the situation with their parents, trying to determine the cause. At times, Global Family provides tutoring assistance. "Most of the students' parents aren't educated, so they don't know how to help their children with school matters," Kader says.

To encourage sponsored students to be givers as well as receivers, Kader has begun a pilot project at three schools where each child is required to donate a small portion of money to a special fund. A group of students decides how to use this fund to help others.

"You are privileged because MCC sponsors you," Kader tells the students. "Look around and see if there are children as poor or poorer than you. You give and see how you experience joy."

Even without Kader's encouragement to give, many sponsored students help others, usually younger siblings. One example is Shaheen Bano, who is now in a teacher-training course and tutors children in the evening. She gives the money she earns to her mother to help feed their large family. Some money also helps a younger sister attend school.

In India, Global Family encourages personal contact between students and sponsors. "When we make home visits, we often see sponsors' birthday and Christmas cards tacked on the walls," Kader says. "These are like treasures to the children."*—Pearl Sensenig of MCC News Service*

Artist hopes to flood MDS with donations

Roman Swiderek's Winnipeg home wasn't hit by the devastating Red River floods of 1996. But he still recalls the memories of alarm he felt as the waters crept into his yard.

The Polish-born artist has turned some of those memories into 12 original water colors, which he has donated for a 1999 calendar to benefit Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

Swiderek hopes to raise $80,000 from calendar sales and $147,000 from the sale of limited-edition prints.

Swiderek says he chose MDS because it continued responding to needs long after other organizations had declared the flood over. "Those guys were still working," he says.

After 18 months, MDS is winding down its Red River response. The agency will not take any more requests for help after the end of October.—*MCC Canada News Service*

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Hesston receives $1.275 million challenge grant

HESSTON, Kan.—Hesston College has been awarded a $1.275 million challenge grant from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, the largest contribution in the college's history.

But to receive the grant, Hesston must raise nearly $3 million for its current capital campaign by July 15, 1999. The grant is intended for renovations to campus dormitories, a library addition and construction of an arboretum visitors and education center.

The grant is the eighth Hesston has received from the Mabee Foundation.

MCC responds to Bangladesh flooding

AKRON, Pa.—In the wake of the worst flood on record in Bangladesh, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is supplying emergency food valued at $10,000 and planning for long-term assistance.

This year's monsoon rains have engulfed two-thirds of the country, affecting some 30 million people. Flood waters have remained well into a second month. MCC Bangladesh country representative Thomas Wenger reports limited feed for livestock, trees dying due to standing water and fish washed out of ponds. Two MCC job creation project sites are also under several feet of water.—*MCC News Service*

Young adult issues highlight council meeting

STURGIS, Mich.—Discussions of the lives, goals and church participation of young adults dominated the annual meeting of the Churchwide Stewardship Council Sept. 11-12 at Amigo Centre. A dozen young adults participated in this year's meeting. Dawn Ranck of Lancaster, Pa., a member of the Mennonite Church's Young Adult Network Steering Committee, led two sessions on generational dynamics. Jane Stoltzfus Buller, associate pastor at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., led another session on young adults and money.

MEDA web site applauded by on-line newsletter

WINNIPEG—Calling it "a great resource page for marketplace Christians," *Scruples Business and Missions Bulletin* has given a five-star rating to Mennonite Economic Development Associates' "The Sunday-Monday Connection" web page. The page is part of MEDA's web site and contains articles and information about connecting faith and work.

Scruples Business and Missions Bulletin is an electronic newsletter for business and professional people interested in business as a platform for mission.—*MEDA News Service*

Correction: A story in the Aug. 18 *The Mennonite* incorrectly reported that a Kenyan woman involved in a Mennonite Central Committee bead project was killed in the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi. Killed in the blast instead was the reported victim's mother.

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Events

Michiana Anabaptist Historians fall meeting, Oct. 17, Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind. Subject: "The Mennonite Experience in America." Contact: 219-533-7819.

Atlantic Coast Conference annual assembly and missions festival, Oct. 23-25, Gordonville, Pa.

Workers

Ross, Richard, retired Sept. 6 as pastor at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Thomas, Marlin, began Oct. 1 as pastor at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Willems, John, retired Aug. 31 as pastor of Bethany Mennonite Church, Albany, Ore.

Yoder, Alvin, was installed Aug. 16 as pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio

Births

Allen, Caleb Thomas, Sept. 4, to Janet Allen, East Peoria, Ill.

Barger, Ian Delain Shreiner, Sept. 26, to Jude Barger and Lori Ann Shreiner, Goshen, Ind.

Bilen, Sara Grace, Aug. 31, to Rita (Schrock) and Sheridan Bilen, Stryker, Ohio.

BreMiller, Olivia Marie, Sept. 4, to Aaron and Donna (Hostetler) BreMiller, Salem, Ore.

Brubaker, Chelsea, Sept. 16, to Jan and Lynn (Sensenig) Brubaker, Akron, Pa.

Brubaker, Jacob Keller, Sept. 28, to Brent and Kathy (Keller) Brubaker, Mount Joy, Pa.

Clark, Tessa Elizabeth, Sept 28, to Karmen (Riegsecker) and Tim Clark, Middlebury, Ind.

Conrad, Michelle Rayhan, Sept. 6, to Paul and Rhonda (Rondak) Conrad, Orrville, Ohio.

Delp, Corinne Elizabeth, Aug. 1, to Michelle (Stewart) and Todd Delp, East Greenville, Pa.

Derstine, Kayla Renee and Tiffany Lin (twins), Sept. 24, to Christopher and Lisa (Eby) Derstine, Sellersville, Pa.

Epp, Lydia Grace, Sept 10, received for adoption Sept. 12, by Christopher and Kathleen (Barr) Epp, Hesston, Kan.

Hochstetler, Conley James, Sept. 28, to Doug and Heidi (Zendt) Hostetler, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hoeltzle, Nathan Lee, Sept. 14, to Jessica (Miller) and Troy Hoeltzle, Landisville, Pa.

Kauffman, Madison Victoria, Sept. 14, received for adoption Sept. 19 by Dale and Vicki (Troyer) Kauffman, Haven, Kan.

Kehl, Zachary Stephen, Aug. 21, to Heather (Hoover) and Roger Kehl, New Hamburg, Ont.

Kelly, Avalon Grace, Aug. 10, to Cheryl (Callison) and Sean Kelly, Gresham, Ore.

Kerr, Desirae Akayla, Sept. 11, to Konrad and Monica (Schwenzer) Kerr, Titusville, Pa.

Laird, Sara Micaiah, July 10, to Kristen (Salisbury) and Tim Laird, Doylestown, Ohio.

Liechty, Elisabeth Jane Koop, Sept. 28, to Dan and Jill Koop Liechty, East Lansing, Mich.

Logan, Cole, Sept. 25, to Mary and Scott Logan, Elkhart, Ind.

Mast, Trey Randall, July 22, to Randy and Veronica (Gingerich) Mast, Plain City, Ohio.

McIlvaine, Lauren Elizabeth, Sept. 11, to David II and Joanne (Groff) McIlvaine, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller, Brian Daniel, Sept. 26, to Bonita (Herr) and Lowell Miller, Sellersville, Pa.

Miller, Landon Michael, Sept. 18, to Devon and Diane (Gingerich) Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Mumaw, Kalinda Rose, Sept. 4, to Jim and Loree (Siegrist) Mumaw, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Nelson, Peter Jeffrey, Sept. 14, to Ann and Dave Nelson, Cincinnati.

Ng, Noah Yuxuan, July 11, to Felicia (Rohrer) and Kok-Hwee Ng, Elkhorn, Wis.

Rogers, Nicholas Allan, Aug. 23, to Christine and Kay Rogers, Washington, Ill.

Sheriff, Jarett Thomas, July 28, to Kent and Michelle (Cornelsen) Sheriff, Newton, Kan.

Sherman, Karen AnnaLora, Sept. 21, to Janie and Tim Sherman, Detroit Lakes, Minn.

Spiegle, Sierra Karilynn, Sept. 23, to John and Vanessa (Enns) Spiegle, Harrisonburg, Va.

Stutzman, Jacquelyn Eve, Aug. 11, to Larry and Lisa (Miller) Stutzman, Dalton, Ohio.

Troyer, Chad David, Sept. 14, to Bette (Ritter) and David Troyer, Hartville, Ohio.

Voth, Aneka Marie, Sept. 19, to Eugene and LaDonna (Unruh) Voth, Newton, Kan.

Weber, Matthew Lamar, July 26, to Arnold and Sandra Weber, Alma, Ont.

Weisheit, Brooke Erin, Sept. 23, to Jill (Schultze) and Joel Weisheit, Henderson, Neb.

Marriages

Bloemberg/Michaud: Mark Bloemberg, Drayton, Ont., and Kelly Michaud, Drayton, Aug. 8, by Willard Metzger.

Blum/Nice: Timothy Blum, Souderton, Pa., and Susan Nice, Telford, Pa., Sept. 26, by John Ehst.

Brenner/Hostetler: Shawn Brenner, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Jill Hostetler, Mount Joy, Pa., Sept. 27, by Joe Sherer.

Buller/Wieser: Paul Buller, Henderson, Neb., and ReNee Wieser, Albion, Neb., Sept. 19, by Frank Baumart, James Murphy and John Yoder-Schrock.

Culp/Vangroningen: Brad Culp, Drayton, Ont., and Teresa Vangroningen, Drayton, Sept. 12, by Willard Metzger.

Dintaman/Hochstetler: Carl Dintaman Jr., Goshen, Ind., and Darlene Hochstetler, Goshen, Aug. 2, by Pam Dintaman and Stephen Dintaman.

Golden/Miller: Brenda Golden, Richmond, Ind., and Doug Miller, Middlebury, Ind., Aug. 15, by David Young.

Hundt/Troyer: Jason Hundt, South Bend, Ind., and Kendra Troyer, Engadine, Mich, Aug. 15, by Stan Troyer and John Troyer.

Kratz/Mathies: David Kratz, Boston, and Anali Mathies, Boston, July 4, by Cameron Kaufman Frey.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is in the process of renewing its accreditation with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). AMBS currently has full accreditation with NCA and is seeking a ten-year renewal of that accreditation. AMBS invites comments related to the work of the seminary to be sent to NCA no later than one month before February 20-24, 1999, when the NCA evaluation visit to AMBS is scheduled. Comments must be in writing and be signed. Send comments to:

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Kuper/Vangroningen: Jerred Kuper, Palmerston, Ont., and Tammy Vangroningen, Drayton, Ont., July 18, by Willard Metzger.
Lester/Showalter: Amy Sue Lester, West Des Moines, Iowa, and Craig Showalter, West Des Moines, Sept. 12, by Mick Murray and Scott Swartzendruber.
Martin/Ramos: Doug Martin, Brownstown, Pa., and Lydia Ramos, Aspers, Pa., Sept. 12, by Leon Miller.
Mayburry/Musselman: Randy Mayburry, Listowel, Ont., and Connie Musselman, Listowel, Sept. 12, by Willard Metzger.
Miller/Weaver: Heath Miller, Silver Lake, Ind., and Jennifer Weaver, Wakarusa, Ind., Sept. 19, by Wesley Bontreger.
Montondo/Zehr: Mary-Margaret Montondo, Watertown, N.Y., and Jerry Zehr, Copenhagen, N.Y., Aug. 1, by Lester Bauman.
Moyer/Mummau: Keith Moyer, Thompsontown, Pa., and Mashelle Mummau, East Waterford, Pa., July 18, by Roy Brubaker.

Deaths

Bean, Reta Kufske, 88, Kitchener, Ont., died Sept. 23. Survivors: husband, Andrew; children Elizabeth McNair, Warren; four grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 26 at Kitchener by Rudy Baergen.
Bowman, Hope Gingrich, 86, Cambridge, Ont., died Sept. 21. Survivors: children Shirley Geiser, Gwen Albrecht, Beatrice Shantz, Robert; nine grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 24 at Drayton, Ont., by Willard Metzger.
Esau, Anna Schierling, 103, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 19. Survivor: daughter, Kathryn Spierling. Burial: Sept. 23 at Inman by Arnold Ensz and Jerry Kaiser.
Hugh, Ernst, 72, Colorado Springs, Colo., died Sept. 17 of cancer. Survivors: children Sharron Denny, Diane Doan, Pam Rediger; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Sept. 22 at Las Vegas, Nev.
Kennel, John, 76, New Holland, Pa., died July 16. Survivors: wife, Esther; children John II, Richard, Donna Keener, Lorene LeBreton, Lynette, Eileen Krabill, Lamar, Dennis, Lindford, Melody Kachel; 12 grandchildren. Burial: July 19 at Gap, Pa., by Clyde Kratz.
King, Emery, 76, Marsh Hill, Pa., died Sept. 12 of leukemia. Survivors: wife, Ruth; children Harry, Ralph, Lois Huston, David, Daniel; 12 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 16 at Frazer, Pa., by Jason Kuniholm and Ralph Malin.
Litwiller, Esther, 91, Hopedale, Ill., died Sept. 23. Burial: Sept. 26 at Hopedale by James Smith and Michael Knowles.
Lutz, Edwin, 86, Orrville, Ohio, died July 15. Burial: July 15 at Dalton, Ohio by Paul Conrad.
Mull, Verda Nofziger, 81, Wauseon, Ohio, died Sept. 24 of heart complications from surgery. Survivor: son, Daniel. Burial: Sept. 27 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Randy Nafziger.
Oyer, Bessie Sutter, 86, Kouts, Ind., died Sept. 15. Survivors: son, Larry; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 18 at Kouts by John Murray and Bill Beck.
Showalter, Margaret Anna, 78, Timberville, Va., died Sept 14. Burial: Sept. 16 at Broadway, Va., by Richard Early, Randall Shull, Mark Landis and Harvey Yoder.
Stere, Adeline Albrecht, 93, Tavistock, Ont., died Aug. 30. Survivors: daughter, Shirley Schmidt; three grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 2 at Tavistock by Darrel Toews.
Swartzendruber, Gregory Dean, 24, Eau Claire, Wis., died Aug. 31 in an airplane crash. Survivors: parents, Winston and Corinne Swartzendruber; grandfather, Walter Swartzendruber; siblings Marcella Miller, Lori Miller, Frank. Burial: Sept. 5 at Leola, Pa., by Calvin Yoder and Lester Graybill.
Weber, Nellie Burkholder, 99, West Liberty, Ohio, died Sept. 11. Survivors: children John, Naomi Headings, Ruth Yoder, Rhoda Neer; 10 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 15 at West Liberty by Randy Reminder and Howard Schmitt.
Wertz, Orpha Stevanus, 85, Pigeon, Mich., died Aug. 3 of cancer. Survivors: children Nova Jean Miller, Ramona Mahler, Willard, Dale, Donald; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 6 at Pigeon by Thomas Beachy and Luke Yoder.
Wideman, Christopher, 18, St. Jacobs, Ont., died Aug. 22 of Crohn's disease and surgery complications. Survivors: parents, Maynard and Sue Wideman. Burial: Aug. 26 at St. Jacobs by Barb Smith-Morrison and Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.
Yousey, Norman, 80, Akron, N.Y., died Sept. 5. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Kathleen Bower, Terrance, Joanne Matusek, Marlene McCollister; 10 grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 9 at Williamsville, N.Y., by Roy Walls Jr.

ANGELS AND DONKEYS
Tales for Christmas and Other Times
ANDRE TROCMÉ
Translated by NELLY TROCME HEWETT

Before You Read These Stories . . .

The stories in this collection were told by Pastor André Trocmé to the children of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon while France was under siege, occupied by Hitler's troops. The people of the area had formed an underground network for saving refugees, many of them Jewish children.

The rescuers did not know what their neighbors were doing. No one talked. Where did these people get their courage to risk their lives to save strangers? (The people of the Plateau are credited with helping nearly 5,000 refugees, about 3,500 of them Jewish, many of whom are still alive today.)

The stories in this book are part of that story. For **the courage to do what one knows one should do** is very often sparked by the memory of a story.

These original stories were told by Pastor Trocmé by the huge lighted tree on Christmas Day in the Protestant (Huguenot) church in that small mountain village, during the poverty and anxiety of wartime uncertainty. Everyone knew that death and betrayal surrounded them on every side. Many of the themes in the stories are couched references to the courage one needs in such circumstances.

This marks the first appearance of these stories in English. Excellent for both children and adults. Great to read aloud.

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by André Trocmé; translated by Nelly Trocmé Hewitt
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classifieds

Classified advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

- **New Holland Mennonite Church** is seeking a half-time ***associate pastor.*** If interested, send your resume to Mary Y. Rittenhouse, New Holland Mennonite Church, 18 Western Ave., New Holland, PA 17557.

- **Belleville Mennonite School** needs an ***English teacher*** beginning Nov. 3, 1998. Please contact Ray Baker, Superintendent, P.O. Box 847, Belleville, PA 17004; 717-935-2184.

- **Landis Homes Retirement Community** is seeking a part-time (24 hours/week) ***associate chaplain*** to work closely with those in health care. Credentialing for ministry is preferred.

  Apply at Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-581-3936.

- **Maplewood Mennonite Church,** Ft. Wayne, Ind., is seeking a ***senior pastor*** for its 180-member congregation. Candidates with strong preaching, teaching and administrative skills should send resumes to Robert Jones, Search Committee, 4129 Maplecrest Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46815.

- **Experience the spiritual witness** of 16th-century Anabaptist martyrs through choral hymns, organ music and poetry. The new CD ***Singing at the Fire: Voices of Anabaptist Martyrs*** features the Eastern Mennonite University Chamber Singers and organist Shirley Sprunger King. $15.95 U.S./$19.95 Cdn. from Faith & Life Press, 800-743-2484.

- **Eastern Mennonite University** seeks a ***director of information systems.*** Directs academic and administrative computing. Master's in appropriate field preferred. Administrative skills, teamwork and understanding of the technical systems required. Application deadline Nov. 15, 1998.

  Contact Dr. Beryl Brubaker, EMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22801; 540-432-4159; brubakerb@emu.edu.

- **Heartland International, Inc.,** is interviewing for ***independent Conklin Company marketing representatives*** in Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Pennsylvania. Opportunity for promotion into sales management. Excellent commissions. We train. Agricultural or construction experience a plus.

  Send resume to Sales Manager, P.O. Box 6301, Lincoln, NE 68506.

- **Niagara United Mennonite Church** is looking for a ***leading pastor,*** to work with ministerial team in a 600-member congregation, commencing 1999 (start date negotiable).

  Send resume or call for information: Search Committee, Niagara United Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 1258, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0; 905-468-3313; fax 905-468-4754.

- **Menno-Hof** is accepting applications for ***volunteer host and hostess.*** Married couple preferred. Must enjoy meeting new people and sharing faith with visitors. Awareness of Anabaptist history helpful. Exciting ministry to thousands of visitors. Positions available Oct. 1, 1998, for one- or two-year term.

  Contact Tim Lichti at Menno-Hof, Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565; 219-768-4117.

- **Landis Homes Retirement Community** is seeking a ***volunteer assistant***—a part-time paid position working 20 hours per week during weekday mornings providing assistance to the director of volunteers. Requires word processing, office and organizational skills. Must be flexible and adaptable to changing work responsibilities.

  Apply at Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-581-3936.

- **Western District Conference** seeks an ***associate conference minister*** to serve at WDC office, 2517 N. Main, N. Newton, Kan. Duties include oversight for congregations and pastors and resource for evangelism and church planting. 3/4-time position to begin Feb. 1, 1999. Preference given to people with M.Div. degree and pastoral experience. Salary according to conference guidelines.

  Contact Marvin Zehr, Box 306, N. Newton, KS 67117; 316-283-6300; email marvz@mennowdc.org; fax 316-283-0620.

- **Kraybill Mennonite School,** Mount Joy, Pa., is accepting applications for a ***middle school (grades 6-8) teacher*** in music, language and some Bible, beginning January 1999.

  For more information and an application, contact John Weber, administrator, Kraybill Mennonite School, 598 Kraybill Church Road, Mount Joy, PA 17552; 717-653-5236; fax 717-653-7334.

- **Warwick River Christian School, Inc.,** is seeking an ***administrator/principal,*** responsible for overall management of the elementary school and child-care center, beginning by August 1999. Qualifications: active member in a Mennonite church, strong commitment to Christ-centered education, at least five years teaching experience and/or administrative experience; master's in school administration preferred.

  Contact Gordon Zook before Oct. 31 at WRCS, 252 Lucas Creek Rd., Newport News, VA 23602; 757-874-4713; email wrcshool@livenet.net.

- **Hinkletown Mennonite School** seeks ***administrator*** to begin June 1999. Qualifications include master's degree and minimum six years successful administrative and/or teaching experience. Training in school administration and possession of teaching certificate preferred. HMS serves 200 students in grades K-8 in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. Visit the student-produced website at http://home.ptd.net/~hmsstaff for more information about the school.

  Send resume to JimShenk@juno.com; or Jim Shenk, 37 Third St., Akron, PA 17501, by Feb. 1, 1999.

- **Shalom Ministries** seeks ***therapist/counselor.*** Individual with independent license in social work, counseling or psychology is sought to work with Mennonite pastors, congregation members and others in the community in northwest Ohio. This new, exciting position requires a person with energy and creativity who is willing to work within the context of the church in a paradigm of wholeness and healing. Responsibilities will include consultation, education and therapy. Must be willing to locate in northwest Ohio.

  Interested individuals contact James Burkett, Shalom Ministries, Box 188, West Liberty, OH 43357; 937-465-0010.

- **Eastern Mennonite University** needs a ***women's soccer coach.*** Initial season fall 1999. Lead transition from club sport to intercollegiate varsity sport. EMU seeks people who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices.

  Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to William Hawk, VP and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email dean@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

- **South Hutchinson Mennonite Church** (Kansas) seeks an ***associate pastor*** to join present staff consisting of lead pastor and youth pastor. Qualified candidates need to be energetic, spiritually mature and people-oriented, committed to church growth and community outreach. Pastoral training and related experience are required with emphasis on counseling ministries, teaching skills and facilitating small group life and fellowship.

  For additional details, questions or application, contact Don Lind, search committee chair, 316-662-7201 or 316-663-4244; South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505.

- **Tel Hai Camp and Retreat,** a year-round Christian camp and retreat located in the Lancaster County, Pa., area, has an immediate opening for ***director of maintenance.*** Responsibilities include general building maintenance and repairs, grounds work, vehicle maintenance and overseeing building projects. This full-time, salaried position offers excellent benefits including housing, utilities, health insurance, paid vacation and retirement.

  For more information, call the camp at 610-273-3969; fax 610-273-3558; or write Tel Hai Camp and Retreat, 31 Lasso Drive, Honey Brook, PA 19344-9261.

- **The Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups** at Elizabethtown College invites applications and nominations for ***Center Fellow*** for fall 1999, spring 2000, summer 1999 and summer 2000. Fellows typically spend one semester at the Young Center pursuing research related to the faith, history and culture of an Anabaptist and/or Pietist group(s).

  Letters of inquiry should describe the Fellow's proposed research activities and possible lecture, course offerings or seminar topics. Include a vitae curriculum that details academic accomplishments.

  Send inquiries or nominations to David B. Eller, director, The Young Center, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022; 717-361-1470; fax 717-361-1443; email youngctr@acad.etown.edu.

by Gordon Houser

While much of what's on television is mind-numbing trivia, there are some shows worth watching. One shining example is the documentary *The Farmer's Wife*, which appeared in September on PBS's *Frontline*.

This remarkable film, which ran in three parts, each about two hours long, follows the lives of a Nebraska farm family in crisis. The filmmaker, David Sutherland, who lived with the Buschkoetter family over a three-year period, takes us into the daily lives of Darrel and Juanita and their three daughters as they try to climb out of debt and continue farming.

While much of television shows us a false reality of consumerism and manufactured conflict, like *Jerry Springer*, *Jenny Jones*, *Hard Copy* or *Crossfire*, *The Farmer's Wife* brings us an almost unmediated reality. I say almost because the director obviously edited the 200-plus hours of film into a little over six hours. But what we witness in the Buschkoetters' lives is what they actually went through.

The couple betrays little awareness that they're being filmed. Even the children, who at first appear conscious of the camera, eventually act and talk freely. The honesty and vulnerability of this family make this a powerful testament to the difficulties they faced and their strength in surviving them intact.

The title character, Juanita, married Darrel just out of high school, against the wishes of her parents. She's a "city girl," according to Darrel, having moved to the farm from nearby Lawrence, Neb., population 350. She gives herself to being Darrel's partner in running their farm operation, which falls on hard times after three years of drought and one of flood. They are in such economic trouble that they have to turn to the federal government's Farmers' Home Administration to manage their debt and, if it deems their operation salvageable, finance the planting of each year's crops.

The Buschkoetters take low-paying jobs in town while continuing the farm work. Juanita accepts most of the responsibility for keeping track of the finances, filling out the forms and visiting their many creditors in town to ask for their cooperation in the government's plan for how they are to pay their bills. The hard work (from 5:30 a.m. to midnight), the demeaning grind of having to face people in the small town who know their situation, the struggle to make ends meet and seek help where they can find it all bring a load of physical and emotional stress.

Much of the focus of the film is on Darrel and Juanita's marriage. Darrel betrays a controlling, abusive perspective that places the farm above everything and blames Juanita for whatever problems they have in their relationship. He reveals his faults, unintentionally, in painful detail.

Somehow they survive. Much of the credit for that, says Juanita, is their faith. We see them at the local Catholic church and watch her say prayers with their daughters before bed. But beyond that, the church seems only marginally involved.

Over a three-year period this family changes, matures and gains wisdom. And we grow with them, marveling at the trials they have to overcome and their tenacity and courage in not only pulling through but letting their struggle be filmed.

While *The Farmer's Wife* is flawed, particulary its use of annoying New Age music, it is a unique work that takes viewers into a family's life and helps us understand the reality of what many farmers face. The slow pace draws us deeper into that reality. It is straightforward; there is no voice-over narrator to interpret events for us. The only voices we hear are those of the subjects and bystanders. Our own lives are enlarged as we gain sympathy for people in difficult circumstances.

Though some poke fun at PBS, it presents a number of worthwhile programs. Also in September, for example, you could have seen shows on the Amish, the School of Assassins, faith and reason, the Shakers, migrant farm workers and the U.S.-Mexican War.

From our readers:

Jane A. Voth of Goessel, Kan., in response to the Sept. 1 Mediaculture column, writes about her family's trip to Disney World this summer. She writes: "MGM Studios and Epcot [two of Disney's parks] ... made me think about how many illusions I take for granted at home on TV, via computer or through our media. There at Disney's fast pace and nonstop thrills, I thought about how we move at such a fast pace in life that we take little time to decide what are illusions and what is real."

Martha Graber of North Newton, Kan., recommends the book *From Wounded Hearts: Faith Stories of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered People and Those Who Love Them*, compiled and edited by Roberta Showalter Kreider. It's available from Chi Rho Press, P.O. Box 7864, Gaithersburg, MD 20898.

films

Smoke Signals (PG-13) is an independent, low-budget film that won a prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Written, directed and acted by Native Americans (they call themselves Indians), this funny yet poignant story follows two Coeur d'Alene boys who travel from their "rez" in Idaho to Arizona to retrieve the ashes of one boy's father, who had left him and his mother years earlier. Full of self-mocking and white-mocking humor, *Smoke Signals* is delightful and moving. The writing (by Sherman Alexie) and direction (by Chris Eyre) are first-rate. Highly recommended.

videos

The End of Violence (R), by noteworthy German director Wim Wenders, is set in Los Angeles, where a movie producer of violent films (Bill Pullman) is kidnapped just after his wife (Andie McDowell) threatens to leave him. His kidnappers are mysteriously killed, and he escapes. An acquaintance (Gabriel Byrne) works for a secret surveillance system designed to help catch criminals in the city. The film's irony, inside jokes and thoughtful dialogue combine with an ambiguous, disturbing ending. Unlike director Oliver Stone, Wenders exposes the evil of violence without wallowing in it.

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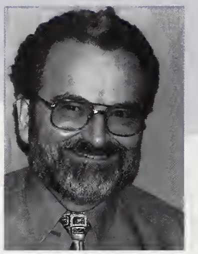

J. Lorne Peachey

Faithfulness and/or unity?

The way some see it, integration has hit a snag that can be summed up in one word: polity. That is, who gets to have final say? Who gets to make the decisions, such as who can be members of the new Mennonite Church?

As surely everyone knows by now, the crunch point is homosexuality. Recently some current Mennonite Church (MC) area conferences have asked congregations that accept noncelibate homosexuals as members to leave. Most if not all these congregations are still members of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC). With merger, now what?

The questions are much broader than this one issue: Do we insist that we believe alike on matters of faith and practice—because God calls us to faithfulness? Or can we agree to disagree on homosexuality and other issues—because God also calls us to unity?

Is it, in other words, faithfulness *or* unity? Or faithfulness *and* unity?

A Membership Committee set up by the joint general boards has tipped its hand on this one. Guidelines it presented to a recent meeting of the Integration Committee (see story in last week's issue) say membership in the new church will be through area conferences. Further, it is the conferences that should each decide the "criteria and processes for membership of congregations."

To make the new church work, we have no choice other than to trust. Otherwise we become little more than a fragmented group giving lip service to unity and faithfulness.

Those decisions, say the guidelines, should be made in consultation with other conferences. The role of the denomination? To make sure that consultation happens. And to provide common understandings, such as the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

The denomination is not to make sure all conferences agree. In fact, the Membership Committee expects they won't. "Even as we anticipate a variety of faithful understandings and practices among us, we strive for the unity to which our Lord calls us," the guidelines read.

The Membership Committee's approach to today's tough issue of membership has much to commend it. One is the example of the early church. At least from my reading of the New Testament, I gather that some congregations required circumcision, some didn't. Some allowed their members to eat food offered to idols while others made this a test of membership. And, depending on how you read Paul's letters, you can conclude some of the first churches used women as leaders and some didn't. Yet there was a unity of faith in Jesus Christ that permeated all the diverse practices of the early believers.

The guidelines for membership in the new Mennonite Church are also commendable because they do not force us to make an artificial choice between faithfulness and unity. If final authority rests with conferences, then there is discernment that goes broader than individual members or individual congregations about what faithfulness means. That definition does not need to include uniformity; there is diversity even in unity.

Of course there will be difficulties. What's to keep a congregation from "conference shopping" until members find one they like? Nothing; it's been done before. And many will ask where we draw the line. If we give in on this issue, what will be next? Good questions—and ones that can only be answered by trust. We must trust each other and the Spirit as we work together at definitions of both faithfulness and unity.

To make the Membership Committee's guidelines work, to make the new church work, we have no choice other than to trust. Otherwise we will become little more than a fragmented group, giving lip service to unity and faithfulness as we pursue our individual interpretations of what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

It's a long way between the first view of the Membership Committee's recommended guidelines to adoption at a joint delegate session in St. Louis in July 1999. All sorts of revisions will happen before they come to the floor. But the spirit of these guidelines bodes well for the new Mennonite Church. God calls us to be faithful. God calls us to be united. With these guidelines we can do both.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Words about the Word

Tim and Melody Landis (Readers Say, Sept. 15) have called for a defense of biblical infallibility in this periodical. I am glad to offer it, although we need not use the term infallible. We proceed in the same way as with other doctrines. We ask, "What do the Bible writers teach about their own writings and the other writings they recognized as Scripture?"

1. The writers ascribe utter truthfulness and reliability to the Scriptures. See Psalm 119:163 and Psalm 12:6.

2. The writers assume as well as explicitly state that the Scriptures cannot be misleading. See John 10:35. Jesus many times settled a dispute by referring to the written word of God.

3. The writers and speakers in the Bible equate the words of Scripture with the very words of God. If the Scripture said it, that means God said it. See Romans 9:17, Psalm 95 and Hebrews 3:7.

4. The Bible writers build on the very details of the Scripture text. See Galatians 3:16. We dare not say details are unimportant.

5. The Bible writers indicate that their writings pull rank on any other claim of divine inspiration. See 1 Corinthians 14:37-38 and 1 John 4:6,7.

6. The Bible writers maintain that the Scriptures are sufficient to guide in every area of life. See Psalm 119:96 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

These are just a few places where the Bible writers themselves teach about what we ought to think about the Scriptures. I commend the chapter on the Bible in Daniel Kauffman's *Doctrines of the Bible.—Monty Ledford, Aberdeen, Idaho*

In his article "Are We Turning the Bible Into a Graven Image" (Speaking Out, Aug. 11), Bradley Siebert sheds a lot of light where there is generally more heat than light. It is a big step to say that anything written down by [human] hand in a foreign language, however inspired, is "a priori" infallible. With all that Hebrews 4:12 says—and it says a powerful and mighty lot—there is no mention of infallibility. Siebert's point is well made that the Bible is the ultimate inspired guide available, but it is not God. Ultimately, only God is infallible. As long as Mennonites continue to answer yes to Scripture's greatest question—"Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9)—matters of unproductive, divisive disagreements over biblical infallibility will resolve themselves. *—Robert J. Zani, Tennessee Colony, Texas*

Integration's basic questions

As I read of all the energy being put into integration, I find myself fearful that instead of renewal and insightful redefinition, we are more likely to pass into the future having missed the greatest opportunity to impact our generation. It seems we've been working at the details for practical reasons. But we need to ask very basic questions, perhaps even more from a business perspective: Why would any congregation want to belong to this new denomination? What benefits are there to such association? What responsibilities will such a congregation have? How much will it cost? These are questions of vision and mission which need much more attention, something recently pointed out by our merger consultant.

I hope for creative approaches that will catch the imagination of our youth and young adults and be user-friendly when it comes to explaining why we're doing all of this anyway. I pray for God-inspired leadership that will capture our hearts and minds. If we do not focus on how our new models will help us impact our culture, we certainly will not. If we are doing all of this as an exercise in restructuring so we capture as many congregations as we currently have, my fears will be realized. If we have a clear reason to want to belong to this new reality, participating congregations will not be a problem; people of vision and faith will want to come along for the ride.*—David E. Mishler, Johnstown, Pa.*

Leave money in the hands of the poor

Thanks for the article "Jesus Must Weep" (Aug. 25). I would like to point out, however, that it conflicts with "Haiti: Killed With Kindness" (March 24). I don't want anyone to think I'm arguing against increased giving—I'm not. I totally agree with the powerfully made points by Ron Sider. I just want to try to reconcile it with the Haiti article and add a couple other suggestions.

There are three reasons why giving is not the total answer—neither for the Christian nor for the poor: (1) Most aid gets intercepted by the not-so-poor. (2) Giving too much takes away (robs) the receiver's self-esteem. (3) Giving never makes up for what we take.

The third reason is most important to me. The present global economic system evolved from colonialism. The world powers—which include most of this magazine's readers—still benefit from the rest of the world's cheap labor and resources. During colonialism, the best

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y readers say

lands were taken and converted to cash crop production, forcing the indigenous population onto the poorer soils. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund's promotion of cash crops simply prolongs that same process. Giving does absolutely nothing to change a system founded on injustice and power.

I have in my hands a brochure from World Vision Australia promoting Jubilee 2000, a Christian-based international petition drive to forgive the debts of the world's poorest nations. The brochure's statement I really like and agree with is, "The best way to get money into the hands of the poor is to leave it there." That's why I support the Jubilee 2000 campaign. That's why I agree with Sider's critique of materialism and consumerism. That's why I suggest a renewed emphasis on simplicity.

Historically, our definition of simplicity has been relative to Western progress. We simply remain 10 to 100 years behind. Even so, we're now suddenly finding ourselves participating in a culture of exploitation. The rich are getting richer. The poor are getting poorer. And that process is happening faster than ever, both nationally and internationally. The only solution is to work and pray against ourselves.
—Eugenio Hess, San Salvador, El Salvador

Love is the word of God

I do not understand the deal concerning gay church members. Homosexuality is wrong; it is a sin. Yet Jesus was sent here for the sinner —the doctor to the sick. If Jesus were on earth, I believe he would walk into a gay bar, sit down and share God's love. No sin is greater than the other. There are a lot of gays here in prison. I do not approve of their lifestyle. Yet I accept what I must because I cannot cast stones. Love is the word of God.
—William Claflin, Lima, Ohio

Cover photo
by Paul M. Schrock

Correction: Sammy Sosa hit 66 home runs in 1998, not 67 as reported in the editorial in the Oct. 6 issue of *The Mennonite.*

In but not Of the world

The church as apostle to the world—part 1

by Lois Barrett

The Bible sometimes describes the missional church as being in the world but not of the world. This church does not have the same values as the world, the same behaviors or the same allegiances. The missional church differs from the world because it looks for its cues from the One who has sent it out, rather than from the powers that appear to run the world.

In the New Testament, the world is not only the human beings whom God loves and the place in which God acts but also the arena in which the powers act. These "powers," "principalities," "governments," "thrones," "authorities," "angels" or "elemental spirits of the universe" have both material and spiritual form. School spirit, for example, is a "power" that shows itself in concrete behaviors at pep rallies or student council meetings, but it is also an atmosphere or an accepted way of doing things that exists beyond the particular, such as students or teachers attending the school at any one time. A company may have a corporate culture that continues, even when all the original owners and employees are gone. These powers, principalities and spirits pervade all human culture, governments, societies and institutions.

> Whenever the church has a vested interest in the status quo—politically, economically, socially—it can easily be captivated by the powers, the institutions, the spirits and the authorities of the world.

In themselves, the powers are neither wholly good nor wholly bad. God has created them; they have roles ordained by God. For instance, human governments have been instituted by God to control societal evil (Romans 13:1-5). However, God does not ordain any particular regime or any particular system of government, although governments, like other powers, have a tendency to set themselves up as ultimate authorities, in the place of God.

When this occurs, the powers become idolatrous. Colossians 2:15 speaks of Christ, through his cross and resurrection, triumphing over the powers, who tend to turn away from God. Through Christ the powers have been unmasked, and believers can see them for what they really are. Romans 8:38-39 testifies that none of these powers, not even death, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Gospels also portray Jesus as having authority over the unclean spirits.

At the same time, the powers can be instruments of evil, as they are in racism, sexism or systems of violence. The evil of racism goes beyond individual acts of racial discrimination; racism is also manifested in systems of white privilege and is indeed one of the powers.

No powers, governments, institutions, spirits or established ways of doing things are absolute, according to the New Testament. They are intended to serve God. Ultimately, Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5), and in the age to come all rulers and powers will acknowledge God's sovereignty.

Establishment mind-set: Although no denomination is officially established in the United States or Canada, most churches nevertheless act out of an establishment mind-set. They behave as if the churches' goals and the goals of the nation-state were entirely compatible. They sometimes put national flags in sanctuaries or honor those who have served in the military by placing their names on engraved plaques under stained-glass windows. The church has grown to expect privilege from governments—tax breaks, laws that support Christian morality, prayer at civic events. In a similar fashion, economic powers tend to captivate the church through its adoption of a market mentality in its evangelism or a dependence on investments for its future survival.

Whenever the church has a vested interest in the status quo—politically, economically, socially—it can easily be captivated by the powers, the institutions, the spirits and the authorities of the world. And whenever the church becomes captivated by the powers, it loses the ability to identify and name evil.

Without an acknowledgment of evil, the church has little basis for evaluating and judging the powers, whether they have turned toward God or toward evil. Without an understanding of evil and of God's ultimate victory over evil in the age to come, it is difficult for the church to have any sense of urgency about its participation in the mission of God's reign in and to the world.

Church, culture and the powers: Culture is related to the powers. Many of the aspects of culture (customs, tradition, language, all those things that give a people a distinctive identity) are themselves powers that can work for good or evil.

Everyone lives in the context of a culture or cultures. Even the most radical individualist lives within a culture, a set of social understandings and practices. Culture is often related to national identity or ethnicity. But most people in North America are surrounded by many cultures and ethnicities. Those from minority cultures and ethnicities usually function biculturally, that is, both in their primary culture and in the dominant culture.

Commonly, only those who are squarely within the dominant culture believe that there is some neutral place to stand outside all cultures. They are like participants in a seminar who were asked to write their ethnicity on a piece of newsprint hanging on the wall. African-Americans knew their ethnicity. Jews knew their ethnicity. But most of the white people from the dominant culture in the United States were either puzzled as to what to write or wrote such things as, "I have no ethnicity" or, "I am a world citizen." The dominant culture gave them the illusion that it was neutral. But there is no such neutrality of culture. All culture is particular.

The church always lives in and among a culture or group of cultures. The vast majority of the church's particular communities share with their neighbors a primary culture or cultures, which include their language, food, perhaps styles of dress and other customs. But they are called to point beyond that culture to the culture of God's new community.

This does not mean that the church or the gospel it preaches is somehow outside culture. There is no cultureless gospel. Jesus himself preached, taught and healed within a specific cultural context. Nor is it the case that the gospel can be reduced to a set of cultureless principles. The message of the reign of God, the gospel, is always communicated with the thought constructs and practices prevalent within the cultural setting of the church in a specific time and place. But when truly shaped by the Holy Spirit, this message also points beyond its present culture's thought forms and customs to the distinctive culture of God's reign proclaimed by Jesus. For this reason, the church is always bicultural, conversant in the language and customs of the surrounding culture and living toward the language and ethics of the gospel. One of the tasks of the church is to translate the gospel so that the surrounding culture can understand it. Yet it is also to help those believers who have been in that culture move toward living according to the behaviors and communal identity of God's missional people, God's "ethnos," in the language of the New Testament (see 1 Peter 2:9).

Nonconformity to the world: In Romans 12:2 Paul instructs believers: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." Then Paul provides a partial list of what it means to be transformed in accordance with the will of God rather than conformed to the world: not thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to think, valuing the gifts of others in the body of Christ, loving one another with mutual affection, being ardent in spirit, being patient in suffering, praying, extending hospitality to strangers, blessing persecutors, associating with the lowly, not repaying evil for evil, living peaceably and overcoming evil with good.

The church is called to be this community, not controlled by the idolatrous powers, not conformed to the common sense of the surrounding culture, but shaping its life and ministry around Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrected power, and living now according to the pattern of the resurrected life in the age to come.

These instructions are not the common wisdom of the dominant culture in North America at the end of the 20th century. Those who follow them will not always be in sync with or understood by their neighbors. This way of behaving is not necessarily possible outside a relationship with Jesus Christ and his church.

The church is called to be this community, not controlled by the idolatrous powers, not conformed to the common sense of the surrounding culture, but shaping its life and ministry around Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrected power, and living now according to the pattern of the resurrected life in the age to come. The nature of the church's witness to the world is this nonconformed engagement with the world. This engagement happens both through specific words and deeds performed in the world and through the witness of being a presence in the world, different from the world, inviting questions, challenging assumptions and demonstrating a life not of the world.

Lois Barrett is executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. This article is adapted from Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, *edited by Darrell L. Guder (Eerdmans, 1998). Part 2 will appear in our next issue.*

Anabaptists in a postmodern age

A report from a conference on "Anabaptists and Postmodernity"

by Jessica King

On the cusp of the 21st century, we Mennonites find ourselves swimming in mainstream middle-American culture in an era that some have dubbed "postmodern." Some 200 Mennonites spent three days in early August in conversation at a Bluffton (Ohio) College-sponsored conference on "Anabaptists and Postmodernity."

The premise of most of the conference presentations was that the modern age is ending. An era characterized by reason, progress, industry and confidence in human agency and initiative is coming to a close. Our current culture generally exemplifies the new era labeled postmodern. This culture shows these traits:

- driven by consumerism,
- skeptical of knowledge,
- tending to reference everything knowable to personal experience instead of empirical knowledge, and
- replacing identity and history with the glorious now.

In postmodernity, said Bluffton professor, conference presenter and planner Sue Biesecker-Mast, pluralism shows up everywhere—in religions, cultures, ideologies, races and lifestyles—to the extent that difference seems to be nothing more than yet another selling point in our consumer culture. It is something to be bought or to own, not to live with or call an identity. To call ourselves Anabaptist in this cultural context, we have to ask how we should live with integrity and faith when Anabaptist distinctives are too easily turned into consumer choices. While Mennonites today often tend to think of their faith in a modern way, as a nonconformist statement to a mainstream culture, in postmodernity even the most obvious Mennonite nonconformists seem accommodated to consumer capitalism. The most problematic thing in all this is that we don't necessarily have a church context in which to make decisions about lifestyle and accountability like we used to.

To call ourselves Anabaptist in this cultural context, we have to ask how we should live with integrity and faith when Anabaptist distinctives are too easily turned into consumer choices.—*Sue Biesecker-Mast*

Two realities: Not only media savvy and car-driving Mennonites have become American consumers; the "separated" and buggy-driving Amish also make it to the mall now. On a recent trip to Goshen, Ind., Biesecker-Mast watched from her hotel room window as Amish buggies pulled into the hitching rail at one of the town's two Wal-Marts. In interposing these two realities—one a separatist, nonworldly tradition and the other the symbol of the mammoth consumer identity of the greater Western world—we see the plight of postmodern Anabaptists. How do we live with these contradictions between faith and mainstream lifestyles, especially when the faith in question says much about simplicity and nonworldly standards?

Perhaps one of the most hopeful aspects of postmodernity is its openness. It seems like a point in our Anabaptist framework where we aren't necessarily catapulting toward one extreme of doctrine or behavior to another, yet many desire movement from where we are. One option for this movement as Anabaptists is to gravitate toward a kind of fundamentalism, where we set protocol for what the church is and who it encompasses. This further insulates our definition of Mennonite and maintains our traditional identity. Another option is to "open the doors" to people of variant beliefs and traditions and include us all under a broader Christendom. In this, unity is greater than peculiarity.

A significant part of this conference's conversation was about a possible third way. The late Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder

Postmodernity: an umbrella term variously used to denote the crisis in confidence since about the middle of this century in such modern intellectual and political projects as the worship of science, the trust in technology, the triumph of reason, the priority of the individual, the glamorization of the new and the demystification of religion.

Postmodernism: aesthetic perspectives particular to postmodernity especially in architecture as well as critical, philosophical, and theological work on the causes, characteristics and responses to postmodernity.

New way of being: Participants talk at the conference (from left): Gerald Biesecker-Mast, Bluffton (Ohio) College; Thomas Heilke, University of Kansas; Bill Trollinger, University of Dayton (Ohio); and Peter Blum, Hillsdale (Mich.) College.

and his ideas were central to the conference; most presenters made reference to him at some point. In fact, before his death last year, Yoder had been planning to attend the conference and make a presentation.

Presenter John Stahl-Wert of Pittsburgh said that Yoder's extensive examinations of the politics of Jesus and the politics of Christ's body anticipated holding out for a third way for the followers of Christ. Yoder called for not falling prey to the ideas presented to us but actively working to integrate radical Christian discipleship into a new way of being. He said that Yoder's example and contribution to postmodern thought in an Anabaptist context help us look at where we are now, where we are going and what way we must take to get there. "Rather than signifying a more severe sectarianism, [Yoder's insights] had everything to do with living and ... witnessing toward God's future in this world," Stahl-Wert said.

"God's future" is not just synthesis or agreement between our available options but a new way of following Jesus, which is the basis on which we have these conversations and on which we have this church. Bluffton professor and conference presenter Gerald Biesecker-Mast said, "This promise of the third way is deep in our Christianity. It is a radical critique of the status quo—a letting go that makes possible new and wonderful things."

If modern Mennonites have failed fully to overcome their church divisions and cultural contexts to exhibit a church whose unity witnesses to Christ's love, what can they expect of the church in postmodernity? What are the challenges and resources for Anabaptist witness during the dramatic changes of our time?

Dangers: While some conference participants emphasized how postmodernity helps us in thinking about radical Christianity, others emphasized the dangers. Stanley Hauerwas, a Duke University professor and theologian, presented the keynote address in Yoder's stead. Hauerwas challenged the church, "Postmodernity is a far too comfortable scenario for alienated people." Like many presenters, he critiqued Christian participation in mainstream American culture. He said, "Christianity is not set out to be sustained by wealthy people."

Money and morality are central to the modern Mennonite church. Our issues often focus on morality and Scripture and occasionally around money and our use of it. Many Mennonites have assimilated well into modernity—in business, church structure and politics. Many of us organize our lives and our churches along the modern lines of rationality rather than the skepticism of postmodern thought.

Many conference presentations and discussions moved around questions in literature, art, economics, modern technology, academics and politics. A younger generation is already being steeped in postmodern ways of thought—in its universities, in society, even in church circles. These younger Mennonites bring postmodern concepts to their faith.

While this discussion was carried out in a largely academic circle, it is relevant to most Mennonite churches in North America. As we discuss questions of polity and membership, we are deciding which direction our church is headed. If modern thought is adhered to, perhaps more church fractures are ahead as we gravitate toward one way of living or another—and we distance ourselves from each other.

If we separate from each other, our church will be missing much of itself. For without dissent or disagreement, conversations or conflict, what use do we have for so much of what Christ taught? Loving one another is easy with those like ourselves, but it is hard for us to love difference.

Now more than ever, we Mennonites need to wholeheartedly engage each other in discussion and action that glorifies God through the body of the church. Examination of our church and ourselves could be the most valuable thing postmodernism brings our way.

Jessica King is coordinator of the Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience (PULSE) program.

Postmodernity is a far too comfortable scenario for alienated people. ... Christianity is not set out to be sustained by wealthy people.

—Stanley Hauerwas

Although the church's theologians made a strong showing at the conference, it was notable that the theologians were joined this time by poets and creative writers seeking to offer resources to the church. While poetry and fiction has often been viewed as dangerous to church discipline and identity, creative writers like Julia Kasdorf and Jeff Gundy demonstrated how their work can help the church pay attention to the neglected experiences and practices of church life. Jeff suggested that the gifts of poets and storytellers can help the church acknowledge the "mystery and turmoil" of human experience. He said that such Anabaptist stories "will include a dream of evangelical and constructive Anabaptism within which we might all live joyfully, purely and peacefully together and a nightmare of nonresistance as unredeemed misery in which the powerful abuse and terrify the meek."—*Gerald Biesecker-Mast*

Conferences get first look at U.S. structure

Proposal calls for leadership board with advisory group

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS, Mo.—The committee charged with designing the U.S. body of the integrated Mennonite Church has unveiled its first draft, proposing significant changes from current leadership and representation. The U.S. Country Committee's work got its first hearing at an integration consultation of area conference leaders held Oct. 6-7 at an Excelsior Springs retreat center.

The differences between the committee's proposal and the current General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) start at the top with an Executive Board largely elected by U.S. Assembly delegates. The new board would be advised by a Constituency Leadership Council (CLC) made up of representatives from the area conferences and "recognized groups," such as racial/ethnic organizations.

By contrast, the 19-member GC General Board is comprised of church organization representatives plus at-large members who are either board-appointed or delegate-elected. The 33 members of the MC General Board represent area conferences or associate groups. Both boards also include delegate-elected officers.

U.S. Country Committee members described the new entity as a leadership board rather than a representative board. Its 20 or 21 members would be "selected on behalf of the whole rather than the parts, which creates a different dynamic around the board table," said committee member Jim Harder. In putting together a slate of candidates for the delegates to select for 14 or 15 positions, the nominating committee would address adequate representation of the various constituent groups. The remaining six spots would be appointed by the board to fill needs for specific skills or gaps in representation.

Some board members would be sent to the boards of program agencies, such as mission and education. Other Executive Board members would work on a Faith and Life Board, responsible for overseeing work such as confession of faith, peace and justice, historical committee and theological issues. There would also be an executive committee. The U.S. structure would include a general secretary and associate secretaries.

While the consultation's 53 participants from 22 U.S. area conferences gave strong affirmation of the committee's proposal, they urged giving the CLC more power and that it not simply offer token representation to groups who stand to lose General Board voices. "It needs to have some teeth; it needs to have some decisional authority," said Kurt Horst, Allegheny Conference minister. "It needs to be more than show and tell."

Harder emphasized that the council needs to be viewed as "legitimate authority," describing it as a parallel structure to the Executive Board.

He also said the CLC could be a base of U.S. identity because it would offer a venue for grass-roots issues not currently available. "It will provide an excellent opportunity for leadership from conferences to convene around a common agenda," he said.

The U.S. Country Committee's proposal includes 11 "desired outcomes"—goals by which to gauge integration's effectiveness, including more members than the total of the original merging groups, more congregations, greater participation by racial/ethnic groups, stronger international relations and articulation of a common U.S. Mennonite identity.

"Whatever we're doing now, a desired outcome is to get more out of it and do it better," Harder said.

But Marv Zehr, another committee member, urged that numbers, particularly membership, should not be the sole criterion for determining integration's success. "I don't want us to have to feel we have failed … if we're not as big as the two [U.S.] denominations combined," he said.

The committee's plan for the U.S. structure includes a delegate assembly of about 1,500 members, a mix of conference and congregational representatives, to meet every other summer. The proposal will be further tested with other groups, including the GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada general boards, which will meet jointly next month in Winnipeg. A country committee is working on the Canadian structure.

Also during the consultation, participants contributed nearly $1,000 for post-Hurricane Georges assistance in Puerto Rico. Ramon Bermudez, one of two Puerto Rico Conference representatives at the consultation, gave a report on the island's condition.—*Rich Preheim*

MEDA chapter helps business take off

Curtis Ross is flying high with the help of Mennonite Economic Development Associates' (MEDA) Sarasota, Fla., chapter.

Ross last year started Son Air Cargo, an air courier that delivers packages and mail throughout the southeastern United States. A former commercial pilot, Ross had dreamed of starting the business for several years.

But he needed financing. Ross approached Roy and Bess Mullett as potential investors. The Mulletts thought of their MEDA chapter. The couple gave the Sarasota group $20,000 to lend to Ross. Half of the loan repayment will stay with the chapter to help other new businesses; the rest will be used for MEDA's international programs.

"[The Mulletts] thought this would be a good way to not only help Curtis financially but also to provide him with advice and encouragement," says chapter president Jim Miller.

The chapter's board meets occasionally with Ross.—*MEDA News Service*

Membership issue could result in withdrawals by congregations, say area conference leaders

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS, Mo.—When 53 U.S. area conference leaders gathered to discuss structure for the integrating church, they started by sharing their apprehensions about the merger. What was said repeatedly at the beginning was heard throughout the Oct. 6-7 meeting: Membership in the new Mennonite Church and related issues such as accountability and autonomy are overwhelmingly the paramount concerns for much of the merging church.

"We don't talk integration unless we talk about that particular issue," said Southeast Conference moderator Rocky Miller.

And it's an issue that could result in some conferences seeing congregations withdraw, some participants said.

The consultation drew moderators, ministers, bishops and other representatives from 22 U.S. General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church area conferences to an Excelsior Springs retreat center to discuss the U.S. structure of the new church. But also on the agenda was responding to a draft of membership guidelines for the new denomination. The proposal, from an integration membership committee, calls for all current GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) member congregations to automatically become members of the new Mennonite Church.

"That says something about fellowship that still doesn't sit well," said South Central Conference minister Dick Headings.

He and representatives from at least five MC conferences said some of their members fear such a membership plan would restore congregations that have been expelled by area conferences. Two MC congregations have been removed from membership by area conferences, and another six are now under other discipline. All also hold GC membership.

"We know of congregations that will withdraw if these congregations are accepted into the new denomination," said Allegheny Conference minister Kurt Horst.

Headings gave a similar report. "We can sit here and talk all we want about unity," he said. "Yet if you would go with me, you would see some very committed Christians who are not ready to leave the church … [but] who are not willing to be part of it unless we address the membership issue."

Added Eastern District president Phil Bergstresser, "My personal feeling is yeah, let's go full-steam ahead. … But that's not where our churches would be."

During small-group discussion of the issue, Iowa-Nebraska Conference moderator David Boshart said his group advocated a congregation's membership be determined by its willingness to adhere to church positions. "It's pretty clear that when we [individuals] join the church … we need to declare ourselves publicly," Boshart reported to the consultation. "It would be a good exercise for the churches [to do likewise]."

Rocky Mountain Conference minister Don Rheimheimer said his group suggested a three-year trial membership for disciplined congregations, "then make an informed judgment [about] if this is going to fit."

While some participants urged stricter membership policies, others pushed for progress on integration. Illinois Conference president-elect Tim Schrag noted that the membership committee's guidelines still place final authority for membership with the area conferences. They will still be able to discipline congregations if they so choose under the new structure.

"I'm not saying this is a liberal or conservative [proposed membership policy]," Schrag said. "It's just saying where those questions will be lodged.

"It almost feels like conferences that are telling the [new] Mennonite Church to take a stand are passing the buck."

The proposed membership guidelines, first presented last month to the Integration Committee, will go to the GC, MC and CMC general boards for further testing at their joint meeting in November in Winnipeg.—*Rich Preheim*

We don't talk integration unless we talk about [the membership] issue.

—*Rocky Miller*

MBM photo by Tom Price

One for the books

Leroy Kauffman, Mennonite Board of Missions chair; Tom Lehman, Commission on Overseas Mission chair; and Floyd Bartel, Commission on Home Ministries chair (left to right), hold copies of the new *Directory of Mennonite Missions*, the first joint listing of all workers with CHM, COM and MBM. The book was introduced Sept. 25 during a joint board meeting of the three agencies.

Partnership of friends reaches Senegal

New venture places first workers in West African country

NEWTON, Kan.—Christian missionaries have been going to Africa for decades. But one couple bound for Senegal will be part of a different kind of partnership.

Jim and Paula Hanes, members of Calvary Mennonite Church in Washington, Ill., left Sept. 11 for Dakar, Senegal, to begin a four-year term serving among the Wolof, a historically Muslim people. The Haneses have two children, Amanda, 3, and Aaron, 1. They are jointly appointed by the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM), which places workers in Africa through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM), and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

These mission agencies are forming a partnership with the Friends of the Wolof, a network of congregations, businesses and interested individuals committed to establishing a church-planting movement among the 3 million Wolof people. The partnership, formed in 1998, grew out of a vision of AIMM and Communion Fellowship, a Mennonite Church congregation in Goshen, Ind., which serves as the lead congregation for Friends of the Wolof.

The Haneses will first concentrate on language study, eventually moving to "friendship evangelism and church planting among the Wolof people," Jim says.

The couple nurtured their vision for mission for several years, feeling called specifically to Africa. With the prayer and monetary support of the Calvary congregation, the Haneses moved to Harrisonburg, Va., so Jim could complete a degree in English and in teaching English to speakers of other languages at Eastern Mennonite University. While there, the Haneses were delighted to meet and form friendships with African students.

"There's a reason why God has helped us to make these connections with people from African cultures," Paula says.

Friends of the Wolof evolved after Jonathan and Carol Bornman, members of Communion Fellowship, applied to serve with AIMM. "AIMM had been considering beginning a new Muslim ministry for the last 10 years or so," says Leona Schrag, AIMM assistant executive secretary. "When the Bornmans applied to AIMM, they said, 'It's very important to us that our church be involved.' "

The Bornmans will go to Senegal next year with MBM as part of Friends of the Wolof. Four more Communion Fellowship members have also applied to go.

Since a group the size of Communion Fellowship—100 members and 150 to 175 regular attenders—can't raise the funds to support everyone, an important component of the project has been inviting a wide variety of individuals, congregations and businesses, Mennonite and non-Mennonite, to participate.

"The kind of thing we're doing, we believe to be the emerging trend in missions," says Communion Fellowship pastor Charles Buller, who grew up in Congo as the child of longtime COM workers. "It means involving the local church at a much higher level. It's not meant to usurp the place of mission boards. But our generation really needs to be part of the action in order to support the work."

> **The kind of thing we're doing, we believe to be the emerging trend in missions.**
>
> *—Charles Buller*

Communion Fellowship, a 16-year-old congregation, is not new to this kind of outreach. The congregation has launched two domestic church-planting efforts, gives prayer and financial support to several mission workers overseas, is working on starting a community wellness center and sponsors a youth coffeehouse.

"For about 10 years, we've been envisioning church planting among an unreached people," Buller says.

For AIMM's part, Schrag says, "We're very excited. We've been looking forward to getting into Senegal for years."

AIMM-COM worker Adela Bergen has been working since the summer of 1996 to make contacts and explore possibilities in the country.—*Melanie Zuercher for GCMC, MBM and AIMM news services*

Spanish jubilation: teachers guide introduced

ELKHART, Ind.—After three years of work, the first Spanish-language Jubilee Sunday school curriculum teachers guide is now available. The guide, for the primary grade level for the quarter beginning in December, was introduced at August's joint convention of the Mennonite Church's Hispanic Mennonite Convention (HMC) and AMIGA, the General Conference Mennonite Church Hispanic group.

Teacher-training sessions were conducted during the convention, which was held in Dallas, Texas.

The project was started in 1995 by the HMC, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and Puerto Rico Conference. More than $35,000 of the needed $277,000 has been raised.

MCC photo by Chris Kennel

Behind the scenes

A Laotian child gets a backstage view of two development workers turned puppeteers who are presenting a show about the dangers of live bombs, left from the Vietnam War, that still litter northern Laos. Mennonite Central Committee sponsors events such as the puppet show in 24 villages to educate people about unexploded weapons. MCC staff members have also written a storybook and trained teachers to spread the message to children.

Goshen College strives to mend relationships following homosexuality controversy

GOSHEN, Ind.—Chalk talk has given way to a concerted attempt at dialogue at Goshen College as recent events highlight the contentiousness of addressing homosexuality.

On Sept. 24, the Advocates, a student homosexual-support group, chalked on campus sidewalks provocative messages to raise awareness about homosexuality. That night, another group of students responded by chalking over the Advocates' messages.

"Some of the [second chalked] messages were vulgar, some were threatening," Goshen president Shirley H. Showalter wrote in an email to everyone on campus, denouncing the messages as violent, hateful and offensive. "All of them violated the rule that offensive messages cannot be chalked on our campus."

The messages that drew the most attention were outlines of a human body over the railroad tracks that run through campus. Written next to them were messages about dead homosexuals.

The incident stirred a number of issues for members of the college community. "There were people on campus who did not feel safe in the wake of this," said academic dean Paul Keim.

About 100 students, faculty and other supporters of the Advocates held an Oct. 2 vigil to denounce the offensive messages.

On Oct. 7, more than 400 people attended a campus forum to discuss how to foster healing on campus. In a statement read by interim dean of students Phyllis Carter, writers of the second chalk messages acknowledged their actions were wrong and accepted responsibility for the results.

Forum leader Mark Chupp, adjunct professor of peace studies, told the audience, "Restoring relationships is a necessary task if we are to discover forgiveness and reconciliation."

The forum was a step to that end, said Student Senate president Ryan Good. "[It] was the beginning of discussing how we can rebuild the sense of trust and safety that was lost through these incidents," he said. "In the words of one student, we spend so much time and energy talking at each other rather than talking to each other."

Follow-up steps are being planned, including more forums and a "week of awareness" Oct. 19-23 led by the Advocates in conjunction with other student groups. The college has also suspended its policy permitting chalked messages on campus.

The second chalking incident is being reviewed by the campus judicial board. Its deliberations and findings will be kept confidential, Keim said. "We want you to know that we are not going to act precipitously," he said, "and that we will continue to follow our judicial process."—Elkhart Truth *with Rachel Lapp*

Bethel College event gets top-100 honors

An organization of travel industry professionals has selected Bethel College's Fall Festival as one of the top 100 events in North America next year.

The Kansas tourism office nominated the event, held each October at the North Newton school, to the American Bus Association. The ABA's 1999 list also includes events such as the Montreal Jazz Festival and a riverboat festival in Cincinnati.

Bethel's Fall Festival events each year include musical performances, a play, sporting events, reunions, children's programs, arts and crafts exhibits and food booths. Some 9,000 people attended this year's Fall Festival, held Oct. 8-11.

Mennonite workers evacuate Lesotho

Mennonite Central Committee has evacuated its four workers in Lesotho following the outbreak of violence last month. Two Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission/Commission on Overseas Mission workers have relocated to neighboring South Africa but still make day trips back into Lesotho.

Violence flared after government opponents refused to accept defeat in recent elections. People in the capital city of Maseru began looting and burning properties, including the deputy prime minister's residence. South Africa and Botswana have sent troops to try to restore order.—*MCC News Service*

Three receive EMU alumni awards

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Three former Eastern Mennonite University students who became health-care professionals were honored by their alma mater during EMU's homecoming weekend Oct. 11. Robert W. and Nancy R. Martin were presented the distinguished service award, and Elton D. Lehman was named alumnus of the year.

Robert Martin, a 1960 graduate and a physician, and Nancy Martin, who attended EMU in 1959-60 and is a nurse, served for 18 years in three stints at Nazareth Hospital in Israel with Mennonite Board of Missions and Eastern Mennonite Missions. The Martins now live in Lancaster, Pa., where Robert is on the staff of Lancaster General Hospital. Nancy teaches nursing at York College.

Lehman, a 1958 EMU graduate, is an osteopathic physician in Mount Eaton, Ohio. Working in an area with a high Amish population, he has delivered 6,150 babies, including 72 sets of twins and one set of triplets. Lehman this year has been named family physician of the year by the Ohio State Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians, and as country doctor of the year by Staff Care, a national temporary placement firm for doctors. He has been featured in *USA Today, People* and *Parade* magazines and NBC's *Today* show.

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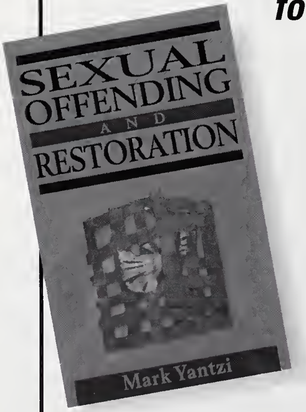

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classifieds

- **Johnstown Christian School** is seeking a ***high school principal*** (full-time) and a ***high school math teacher*** (part-time). For information, call Linda Gundlach at 814-288-2588.

- **New Holland Mennonite Church** is seeking a half-time ***associate pastor.*** If interested, send your resume to Mary Y. Rittenhouse, New Holland Mennonite Church, 18 Western Ave., New Holland, PA 17557.

- **Landis Homes Retirement Community** is seeking a part-time (24 hours/week) ***associate chaplain*** to work closely with those in health care. Credentialing for ministry is preferred.

  Apply at Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-581-3936.

- **Mennonite Voluntary Service** is seeking a half-time ***administrator*** responsible for MVS unit administration and recruitment coordination. The person must have a vision for following the way of Jesus in service, strong communication skills and be open to travel. Please contact us at 316-283-5100; email mvs@gcmc.org.

- **Bethany Christian Schools** (grades 6-12; enrollment 300) invites applications for the position of ***admissions counselor*** (3/4-time). Please submit a resume and letter of application to Allan Dueck, principal, Bethany Christian Schools, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. For information, call Allan Dueck at 219-534-2567.

- **Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church** is looking for a part-time ***pastor of administration and leadership development*** to begin ministry as early as January 1999.

  Resumes can be sent to Pastor Glenn (Woody) Dalton, Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church, 2001 Chestnut St., Harrisburg, PA 17104, by Dec. 1.

- **Jubilee Association,** a growing not-for-profit that serves adults with developmental disabilities in Montgomery County, Md., is seeking an ***accounting manager.*** Responsibilities include preparing GAAP statements, participation in budget decisions, managing accounts receivable and supervising full-time bookkeeper. Accounting degree and three years experience required.

  Send resume and salary requirements to Paula Snyder at Jubilee Association, 11141 Georgia Ave. #324, Wheaton, MD 20902, 301-949-8674.

- **New Danville Mennonite School,** an accredited K-8 school located in Lancaster, Pa., has an opening for an ***administrator.*** Applications are welcomed from qualified individuals who have a commitment to Anabaptist values and Christian education.

  Contact Gary Yoder, 1028 Frances Ave., Lancaster, PA 17601; 717-394-5239 (evening); 717-581-6100 ext. 128 (daytime); email BY1028@aol.com.

- **Landis Homes Retirement Community** is seeking a ***volunteer assistant***—a part-time paid position working 20 hours per week during weekday mornings providing assistance to the director of volunteers. Requires word processing, office and organizational skills. Must be flexible and adaptable to changing work responsibilities.

  Apply at Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543; 717-581-3936.

- **Niagara United Mennonite Church** is looking for a ***leading pastor,*** to work with ministerial team in a 600-member congregation, commencing 1999 (start date negotiable).

  Send resume or call for information: Search Committee, Niagara United Mennonite Church, P.O. Box 1258, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0; 905-468-3313; fax 905-468-4754.

- **Hesston College** seeks a ***campus pastor,*** a full-time nine-month position. The campus pastor is responsible for all religious life programming and functions as a spiritual resource to students, faculty and staff. Mennonite college experience and degree from a Mennonite seminary preferred. Interviews begin in January. Position available mid-August 1999.

  Apply to Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email CharH@hesston.edu, or call 316-327-8234 for more information.

- **Western District Conference** seeks an ***associate conference minister*** to serve at WDC office, 2517 N. Main, N. Newton, Kan. Duties include oversight for congregations and pastors and resource for evangelism and church planting. 3/4-time position to begin Feb. 1, 1999. Preference given to people with M.Div. degree and pastoral experience. Salary according to conference guidelines.

  Contact Marvin Zehr, Box 306, N. Newton, KS 67117; 316-283-6300; email marvz@mennowdc.org; fax 316-283-0620.

- **Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church** invites applications and resumes for a full-time ***leading minister.*** We are a General Conference congregation of some 500 members, situated 1 1/4 hour south of Winnipeg. Qualifications: Should show strength in team leadership, knowledge in Anabaptist foundations, and familiarity in Old and New Testament studies. This person should possess motivation, vision for both ministerial team and congregation, and skill in communications—speaking, listening and facilitating.

  Contact: Search Committee, c/o Peter Hildebrand, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; 204-324-8317; email aaront@mb.sympatico.ca.

- **Hesston College** needs a ***resident director*** for men's residence hall. The resident director will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff; assist in enforcement of campus standards. Qualifications: strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite Church, leadership ability, listening and relational skills. Two-year commitment minimum. Bachelor's degree preferred.

  Apply to Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email CharH@hesston.edu, or call 316-327-8234 for information. Application deadline Nov. 6, 1998. Position available Jan. 4, 1999.

- **Shalom Ministries** seeks ***therapist/counselor.*** Individual with independent license in social work, counseling or psychology is sought to work with Mennonite pastors, congregation members and others in the community in northwest Ohio. This new, exciting position requires a person with energy and creativity who is willing to work within the context of the church in a paradigm of wholeness and healing. Responsibilities will include consultation, education and therapy. Must be willing to locate in northwest Ohio.

  Interested individuals contact James Burkett, Shalom Ministries, Box 188, West Liberty, OH 43357; 937-465-0010.

- **Hinkletown Mennonite School** seeks **administrator** to begin June 1999. Qualifications include master's degree and minimum six years successful administrative and/or teaching experience. Training in school administration and possession of teaching certificate preferred. HMS serves 200 students in grades K-8 in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. Visit the student-produced website at http://home.ptd.net/~hmsstaff for more information about the school.

  Send resume to JimShenk@juno.com; or Jim Shenk, 37 Third St., Akron, PA 17501, by Feb. 1, 1999.

- **South Hutchinson Mennonite Church** (Kansas) seeks an ***associate pastor*** to join present staff consisting of lead pastor and youth pastor. Qualified candidates need to be energetic, spiritually mature and people-oriented, committed to church growth and community outreach. Pastoral training and related experience are required with emphasis on counseling ministries, teaching skills and facilitating small group life and fellowship.

  For additional details, questions or application, contact Don Lind, search committee chair, 316-662-7201 or 316-663-4244; South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505.

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  For more information, call the camp at 610-273-3969; fax 610-273-3558; or write Tel Hai Camp and Retreat, 31 Lasso Drive, Honey Brook, PA 19344-9261.

- **The Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups** at Elizabethtown College invites applications and nominations for ***Center Fellow*** for fall 1999, spring 2000, summer 1999 and summer 2000. Fellows typically spend one semester at the Young Center pursuing research related to the faith, history and culture of an Anabaptist and/or Pietist group(s).

  Letters of inquiry should describe the Fellow's proposed research activities and possible lecture, course offerings or seminar topics. Include a vitae curriculum that details academic accomplishments.

  Send inquiries or nominations to David B. Eller, director, The Young Center, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022; 717-361-1470; fax 717-361-1443; email youngctr@acad.etown.edu.

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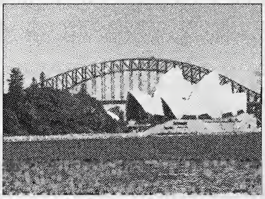

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by Omar Eby

Trusting the eternal silence

Thou art my son; this day I become your father. Ask of me what you will: … Kiss the son, lest the father be angry.—Psalm 2:7,8,12

God is an indulgent father; he dares his child to make an extravagant request. Indeed, he begs the child to seek his favor so that he may demonstrate his magnificent generosity. Further, God has declared his fatherhood to some young male, made him his darling son. An election.

But is the election universal? I had been a willing son, a simple, trustful son. But experiences with this Father have made me a shy and hesitant son. Sometimes even a distrustful son. Too many times I asked and there was silence. Indeed, today I know more about unanswered prayers than I do answered ones.

So I feel mocked to read again, "Ask what you will." I am afraid to ask because again there may be no answer. I could lose my trust in such promises, and I have so little faith now; I cannot risk the eternal silence. And maybe I am not a darling son to whom these words are addressed. After all, did not the Lord himself declare, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"?

The second injunction must be addressed to the heathen: "Kiss the son." Ought not the modern New York pagan editor give deference to the Lord's anointed? Yes, but in my mind just now lies that other plaintive query: "Why do the heathen prosper?" I want to ring up the editor and cry, "Kiss the son, you heathen, lest Jehovah smite you with dizziness!" But I have only anger just now—and little faith—so I must go for a walk and not make a phone call.

O Lord, happy are all who take refuge with you. The son you love—the son you neglect. Amen.

Too many times I asked and there was silence. Indeed, today I know more about unanswered prayers than I do answered ones.

Almost a god

What is man that thou shouldst remember him? … Yet thou has made him little less than a god.—Psalm 8:4,5

A clear night's meditation on the stars puts one's pride and worry into perspective. We are made small—our great achievements and our great fears pale. They fall away from us; they lie laughing, whimpering, weeping in the cosmic dust. The modern Christian mind sometimes lurches toward unbelief, gazing out at the stars. Are we alone, on a solitary planet, swimming blindly through space? Terror-filled, we draw back from such nihilism.

What is man? What is woman? Dear God, what do they want? Are these questions of intellection? The educated person who deals with the more cognitive aspects of experience? Does the unsophisticated never query: What is man, what is woman—in relation to nature, to the divine mind, to corporate human systems?

"Man is little less than a god." This uttered by a shepherd-boy-poet-king before the scientific revolution, before the Age of Enlightenment and before nuclear technology. We are today almost a god. Yet there is a creeping distrust of society's intelligentsia today. Or is it only my fears of academic irreverence and irrelevance?

God crowned the human being (made in God's image) with "honor and glory" and made it master over all creation. Human works do not glorify themselves so much as does the divine attention. How then shall I manifest that divine focus? By acts of devotion and adoration, by acts of justice and compassion, by a humble spirit, by being a gentle gardener in this fallen Eden. How miserably fails this cold heart!

O Lord, how glorious is thy name in all the earth. O may my own little world be touched again with your glory. Amen.

Omar Eby teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. His column appears about once each month

Human works do not glorify themselves so much as does the divine attention.

Faith resources

A Place to Pray: Reflections on the Lord's Prayer by Roberta C. Bondi (Abingdon Press, 1998, $16.95) draws on the author's experiences, teaching and study of the early church to address the issues that make praying the Lord's Prayer difficult for many. Under the same title is a set of three videocassettes that presents seven programs on the meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Roberta Bondi reflects on a phrase from the prayer, then discusses it with four others. Each of the seven programs is 25 to 27 minutes. Produced by EcuFilm for $149.90.

God's Week Has Seven Days: Monday Musings for Marketplace Christians by Wally Kroeker (Herald Press, 1998, $8.99 U.S., $12.85 Cdn.) presents 52 reflections with the premise that all of life is God's domain.

Women and Men: Gender in the Church, edited by Carol Penner (Herald Press, 1998, $9.99 U.S., $14.25 Cdn.), includes articles by male and female writers that explore what it means to be women and men together in the church and community.

At Ease: Discussing Money and Values in Small Groups by John and Sylvia Ronsvalle and U. Milo Kaufmann (Alban Institute, 1998, $12.25) adapts small-group techniques to create a comfortable setting for congregations to discuss money and values.

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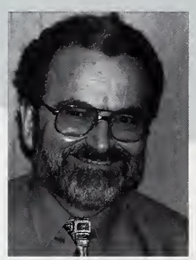

J. Lorne Peachey

'I'm not a theologian, but ... '

It happened again last Sunday. Our class was in the middle of a discussion about I forget what when someone began a long discourse with the words, "I'm not a theologian, but ..."

And it was true, I decided after a couple of minutes, the speaker wasn't a theologian—at least not this time. A lot of what I heard didn't make sense, nor did I agree with much of what did. However, I've sat through enough of these discussions to know that occasionally something does make sense. Sometimes it might even change my life.

"I'm not a theologian, but ..." That seems to be a standard preface for many of us in Christian education settings, small groups or other times when we say something about our faith. From somewhere we've gotten the notion that theology, i.e., talk about God, is something done for us by the professionals (and then we're not keen on what they do much of the time). What we more ordinary people do is, well, just talk.

Gayle Gerber Koontz, who teaches theology and ethics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., isn't so quick to let any of us off the hook. Speaking at a symposium on the church in mid-September (see story in our Oct. 6 issue), Gayle identified three kinds of theology that happen simultaneously in the church: professional, pastoral and popular. She illustrated the differences by relating them to integration.

If we would continue to have an alive and vibrant church as we go into integration and beyond, each of us must take on our part of doing theology.

Professional theologians, those people who make their living teaching or writing about God and the church, have a responsibility today to help the Mennonite church decide such things as what unity means, what kind of unity we want (belief and/or practice) and how we put into practice values such as justice, dignity and respect as we become united?

Pastoral theologians need to help us grieve as we leave the familiar and the comfortable for something new, help build anticipation for that new and find ways for people in the two merging groups to get to know each other.

And the popular theologians? Who are they?

"Popular theologians are the ones who write letters about integration in church publications," Gayle said. And they need to be paid attention to. "Our work as professional and pastoral theologians is to listen to what is being said and to be in discernment with it," she said.

(Of course, comments like that make any church magazine editor pay attention. I must admit it also provides ammunition for answering yet another letter about why *The Mennonite* prints such "controversial" letters—and up front at that!)

Letters to the editor are only one forum in which this happens. Popular theology also takes place in Sunday school classes, small groups, fellowship hours, informal conversations. Wherever two or three are gathered, there theology can happen.

When it does, when we take the time to share our understandings of God and the church, we can help each other come to new insights, maybe even change a life or two. The result can be greater faithfulness to what we have been called as Mennonites.

In a day when specialization reigns, when information and knowledge can soon overwhelm, our temptation as a church can be to let theology be the domain solely of the professionals and the pastors. They clearly have their place: to teach, to provide tools, to lead, to point out pitfalls, to make suggestions.

But if we would continue to have a living and vibrant church as we go into integration and beyond, each of us must take on our part of doing theology. Or the church we end up with will minister only to the professionals.

Next time I hear someone begin to pontificate with the words, "I'm not a theologian, but ... ," I probably won't stop the discourse to point out the error. But I do resolve not to use those words myself. It's my first step toward claiming my responsibility to help the church do its theology—whether it be through participating in a Sunday school class discussion, sending a letter to an editor or even writing an editorial.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

October 27, 1998

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lanting an anti-racist church

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Striking out

Re "Another Home Run for Racism" (Editorial, Oct. 6): Give me a break! It was astounding that the writer found racism in the home run race that so riveted the country. Why must Americans look for a problem or be politically correct rather than be content with the fact that people pulled off a fantastic feat this summer?

I have no clue how not mentioning Josh Gibson on a regular basis has anything to do with racism, given the fact that we know so little about his accomplishments. Yes, it is an example of past racism—and a tragedy—that Gibson was not allowed to play in the majors. Yes, he surely would have held some type of record. However, the contention that the media's lack of attention to Gibson this summer was racially motivated is absurd. As the editiorial stated, no one really knows how many home runs the man hit. It could have been more than Hank Aaron's total, and it could have been more than Mark McGwire's 70. But we'll never know because accurate records were not kept. We do know that, in his time, Gibson was a great player who never received the accolades from the mainstream press that he should have. However, the lack of current media attention and this summer's home run race did not demean Gibson's accomplishments. In fact, my guess is that it will eventually heighten them.—*Chet Roberts, Goessel, Kan.*

How completely unfair to use the word "racism" when comparing Mark McGwire's home run record to that of Josh Gibson. I dislike racism as much as anyone, but why use major league baseball in the 1990s as an example? Why not look at the criminal justice system? Or how about looking at Congress?

I'm not trying to make light of racism. I even understand the point the editorial was trying to make. I just believe something more compelling than baseball could be fouind to make the point about racism. Baseball is not an "ugly legacy of racism needing to be overcome"—at least not in the 1990s.—*Donnie Shelton, Florence, Ariz.*

'Everybody in' could mean opting out

"Everybody in" sounds fair. An integration membership committee is recommending that all current General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada congregations should automatically be members of the new denomination ("Committee Recommends All Current GC, MC, CMC Congregations Be Members of New Denomination," Oct. 6). Such a recommendation fails to acknowledge two realities of congregational life.

First, avoiding issues related to homosexuality and congregational membership is not an option. Just ask any pastoral candidate who has been interviewed by a pastoral search committee. The recommendation to include all congregations is described as an "attempt not to make homosexuality a test of membership." However, an "everybody in" decision is a values declaration for the new denomination. The question my congregation must answer is whether we can live with such values. In our generation, decisions concerning whether or not noncelibate homosexuals are granted membership in a congregation has become a theological litmus test. The new denomination must decide which part of the theological spectrum to include rather than play with the fantasy that everybody can be included.

Second, not only are individuals losing denominational loyalty, so are congregations. And congregations make their own decisions about their identity. With the dissolution of the existing GC and MC structures, congregations will feel greater freedom to make choices concerning long-term affiliations. Perhaps the "everybody in" approach is an attempt to short-circuit open congregational processing of options for affiliation. Unfortunately, the "everybody in" approach makes it more likely that my congregation will feel a need to explore additional options for affiliation before making a choice.—*Allan Yoder, Stevens, Pa.*

Different center

I was quoted in "Tackling Integration Theologically" (Oct. 6) as urging "focusing the church's attention on its center, Jesus Christ." While I could have said that, or perhaps should have said that, I did not, in fact, say that. I was agreeing with Peter's speech in Acts 10 that the gospel of peace lies at the center of our faith, and I was encouraging the integrating church to view integration as "a unique and God-given opportunity to review our tradition and to renew our commitment to the gospel of peace." In the text of Acts 10, God is the preacher of peace, and peace summarizes the mission of Jesus. It is that focus that should, it seems to me, be the center of any effort toward Mennonite unity.—*Mary Schertz, associate professor of New Testament, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.*

theMennonite

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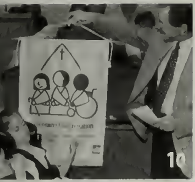

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readers say

The Mennonite way

As we move toward integration and struggle with the issues involved, it would be well for us to remember that Mennonite history is replete with schisms, expulsions and withdrawals, all in the name of Christ and to keep the body of Christ pure and holy. The recent expulsion of two congregations and the withdrawal of another over the issue of homosexuality are only the latest in our long history of not being able to work out our differences. The 1997 *Mennonite Yearbook* lists, besides the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC), 22 other Mennonite fellowships, conferences and bodies. And that doesn't include the Mennonite Brethren; the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite; and a number of other Mennonite bodies. One can't help but wonder how many different "pure" bodies of Christ and "correct" interpretations of Scripture exist among Mennonites.

The Integration Committee is undoubtedly working hard to develop a plan for membership in the new denomination that is acceptable, or at least tolerable, to most congregations. In the back of the committee members' minds is probably the thought that they need to develop a plan that will result in the least number of congregations leaving, or not even joining, the new denomination.

I remember telling friends some 30 to 35 years ago that I expected to see the two groups merge within my lifetime. It didn't take prophetic insight to see that increasing cooperation between our two bodies was moving us in that direction. Nor does it take prophetic insight to see that integration, along with thorny issues such as homosexuality, will likely result in more expulsions, withdrawals by congregations and schisms. After all, that's the Mennonite way.
—Lamont A. Woelk, Richlandtown, Pa.

Cover photo
by Marilyn Nolt

Out on the edge

A conference's church-planting strategy takes a Mennonite congregation in Dallas, Texas, in a different direction.

by Melanie Zuercher

Michelle Armster (left) talks with Stephanie Nance, another member of Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas.

As a child, Michelle Armster figured out for herself that there were some things she as a Christian couldn't accept, and violence was one of them.

Growing up in a military family, she lived in many different places, but she clearly remembers in fifth grade in California having a girl in her class who wore a head covering. "She invited me to her church, and it always stuck with me—the conservative dress, the austere room, the men and women on different sides," says Michelle.

As an adult, one of the religious traditions Michelle looked for whenever she moved to a new place was Mennonite. She found it in Salina, Kan., and then in the late 1980s at Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas.

Anti-racist: About 18 months ago, Western District Conference asked Peace Church to take the lead in planting a new, English-speaking church in the Dallas metropolitan area. In one of the outreach committee meetings that included the church planting discussion, Michelle brought up the challenge of making the new church multicultural and anti-racist. "This gave voice to something I'd been thinking and feeling for a long time," she says.

Along with Marcia Stoesz, another member at Peace Church, Michelle and pastor Dick Davis participated in a "dismantling racism" session run by Crossroads Ministries, the organization that conducts Damascus Road anti-racism training for Mennonite institutional groups.

Peace's developing vision for church planting took a turn in a different direction. "Our hope was for a church that had education, proclamation, focused around Jesus' nonviolent ethic—but we were also determined that it should be multicultural and actively anti-racist," says Dick.

The greater—the worldwide—Mennonite church is made up of people of color, but the Western church is very segregated. Its foundation is built on sustaining a Russian-German Mennonite culture. The approach is open arms, but make sure you learn that hymn, 6-0-whatever, and like rhubarb pie.—*Michelle Armster*

"If we follow a path we know, we'll end up in the same place, and we're trying to get to a place we've never been," says Tammerie Spires, Dallas—City on a Hill (see box on page 5) program coordinator and a Peace member.

"The pattern is for the 'great white hope' to come in and do everything," says Michelle. "And then when they leave or retire, there is no leadership to fill in.

"The greater—the worldwide—Mennonite church is made up of people of color, but the Western church is very segregated. Its foundation is built on sustaining a Russian-German Mennonite culture. The approach is open arms, but make sure you learn that hymn, 6-0-whatever, and like rhubarb pie.

"So what happens is I have been isolated. [Those things have] nothing to do with my faith, but it seems like that's what it means to be a Western/American Mennonite instead of allowing the [new] church to develop its own culture," says Michelle.

"The Crossroads training was very powerful," says Marcia. "I became aware that the road we were going down [with] this church plant was leading us to a white, middle-class church. Of course, now the question is how do we as a white, middle-class church give birth to something very different from us?"

"Something that will not just look different but be different," Michelle adds.

"Tammerie gave me some hope in a sermon she preached about Sarah, who was barren but gave birth late in life," says Marcia. "Maybe there's hope that we can give birth, too."

The church has drafted a set of leadership guidelines, a description of the attributes or characteristics the group believes the new church will require in its leadership. Among them are the desire for a multicultural leadership team, inclusive of blacks, whites, Hispanics and women; strong commitment to Anabaptist thinking and values; and passion for the intention to institutionalize anti-racist thinking and behavior in the new church.

"We need someone [as a church planter] who has the heart for this," says Dick. "We deliberately don't specify requirements for the amount of education this person or these people must have because that could eliminate exactly who we need."

In addition, says Tammerie, "we want to be accountable to communities of color in this work." The church has sent for feedback a draft of the leadership guidelines and vision for the new church plant to local communities of color as well as to the Hispanic Mennonite churches in Dallas and to groups such as the African-American Mennonite Association, United Native Ministries, the Hispanic Mennonite Convention, AMIGA (Hispanic Mennonite Church Association) and Mennonite Indian Leaders Council.

So far, only United Native Ministries has responded. "We can only ask them to help us, to make us accountable," says Dick. "We have to convince these folks that we're serious."

Self-examination: "What's happening is we are developing a new system of how to do things," says Michelle, "of relating to other [Dallas Mennonite] congregations, of questioning how we do some things. We're learning what it means to be accountable—that it means building and being in relationships, and that's hard when languages and cultures are so different. We're learning to identify what might have been done wrong earlier, how our walk is different from our talk. We're doing some really hard self-examination."

"We are starting to ask ourselves what are those core things about Anabaptism—not the superficial, cultural thing—and, by the way, I don't like rhubarb pie!" says Marcia. "What does it mean to be a Mennonite in Dallas, Texas, in 1998?

"When we first started working on the City on a Hill proposal, we were thinking, ... how can we use this money effectively for projects? By the time the group began the process of starting to relate to the different [Mennonite groups] involved, it was shifting from being project-oriented to being more about identity and relationships and who we are in the city instead of what we do."

Of the $25,000 City on a Hill grant, $10,000 will go into a number of projects of the various churches, while $15,000 is designated for the church plant, to help pay a church planter or planters brought in from outside or possibly to help develop "indigenous leadership"—one or more people already in one of the Dallas churches, says Dick.

Tammerie calls what's happening with the church planting process "a confluence of Western District strategy, City on a Hill funds and the Holy Spirit."

"The [City on a Hill] proposal became the vehicle for developing a new idea," says Marcia. "It's given us a framework for relating to the Hispanic churches in a way that we would not have done otherwise."

We're feeling God's Spirit pushing us to move to the edge. The older I get, the more I think God is out there on those edges—instead of inside the neat structures—where things are messy and questionable and tender.—*Dick Davis*

"It continues to be the vehicle for calling us to examine ourselves," says Michelle.

As one way of doing this, some church members have begun holding a series of informal, ad hoc meetings to discuss church-planting strategy and philosophy. They call these "kitchen table meetings," meant to be times of group reflection, continuing analysis of the church planting process, and prayer—lots of it.

"Sometimes it seems like we're moving so slowly," Dick says. "We were at about this same place several months ago, and we felt like we just needed to stop and pray. We did a lot of soul-searching, and we felt a second blessing.

"We're feeling God's Spirit pushing us to move to the edge," says Dick. "The older I get, the more I think God is out there on those edges—instead of inside the neat structures—where things are messy and questionable and tender."

Melanie Zuercher is news service editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Dallas is the fifth recipient of the City on a Hill grant, $25,000 U.S. given annually by the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church to an urban ministries program in North America that combines service and evangelism. Previous awards have gone to Vancouver (1997), the Denver area (1996), Toronto (1995) and Fresno, Calif. (1994).

A holy nation

The church as apostle to the world—part 2

by Lois Barrett

The church is called to have a different political identity from the people around it.

In contrast to contemporary understandings of the church as voluntary association, chaplain to society or vendor of religious goods and services, one of the most important understandings of the church in the New Testament is a political one: the church as holy nation.

This key image is invoked for the church in 1 Peter 2:9. The Christian church took for itself the idea of nationhood but opened it up more radically than had the Jewish proselytizers to include Gentiles as well as Jews.

A word just as political but more frequently used in the New Testament is "kingdom." The center of Jesus' message was the reign or kingdom of God (see Mark 1:15). His preaching of the reign of God was continued by the early church: Philip (Acts 8:12), Paul and Barnabas (14:22), Paul alone (19:8; 20:25), the writer of Hebrews (1:8; 12:28), James (2:5), the second letter of Peter (1:11) and John (Revelation 1:9; 12:10). Jesus is given the title "King" or "King of kings," and in Revelation the saints are called "kings" as well (1:6; 5:10 KJV). Even the title "Lord" for Jesus is a political title, since in the first-century Roman Empire it was expected that one would call Caesar "lord." Like the rulers of the world, God is seen as Judge (2 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 18:8), and the title is applied to Jesus as well (Acts 10:42).

Even the word "church" has a political connotation. While the Greek word for church, "ekklesia," can mean any assembly, it often refers to an assembly gathered for decision-making, a town meeting. Thus the church is that gathering of the reign of God assembled to be a sign of that reign, to proclaim the reign of God in word and deed, to make decisions and to give allegiance to their Ruler. Participants in this gathering are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). They are no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints, those who are holy (Ephesians 2:19).

The New Testament also claims that, in Jesus' death and resurrection, Christ has defeated the "rulers and authorities." Colossians 2:9-15 declares that Christ has disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, leading them as hostages in triumphal victory procession. Indeed, Christ is now not only head of the church but head of every ruler and authority (see also Ephesians 1:20-23). Part of the task of the church is to make known the wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities (Ephesians 3:10).

Such language is a dramatic challenge to the powers, governments, authorities and institutions of the world. These political claims for Christ and for the church as the people of God demand that people make a choice of allegiance. The "holy" people will be those who have been set apart for Christ's service. They are the people different from those around them, different because they have given their ultimate allegiance to God through Jesus as Lord.

Worship as a political act: The church is called to have a different political identity from the people around it. The symbol of the church's alternative political identity is worship. God the Ruler is at the center of the church's worship. The praise and prayer of worship, the reading and preaching of Scripture, the fellowship around the table and the washing of baptism that initiates new citizens of heaven—all these define an alternative community with an alternative allegiance.

If Christian faith makes any difference in behavior, then the church in conformity with Christ is called to an alternative set of behaviors, an alternative ethic, an alternative kind of relationship, in dialogue with the surrounding cultures. Its differentness is itself a witness to the gospel. The church may be different from the world at only a few key points, but that is enough to make a powerful witness. Moreover, as its cultural setting is constantly changing, the church itself must discern where its allegiance to the reign of God requires nonconformity.

Christians share the languages of the cultures that surround them, but they speak with a distinctive vocabulary that expresses realities they experience and are now able to identify through the Holy Spirit. This different vocabulary is not confined to technical theological terms employed by the church as verbal shorthand for complex Christian experience. It also includes simple words like sin, grace and holiness, words reflecting equally complex realities but seldom used in everyday speech in North America.

God's "sent people" do not use this distinctive vocabulary in order to keep secrets from the world. This would be contrary to their mission in and to the reign of God. But distinctive words are needed to signal the new and different life Christians find themselves living in communion with God's holy nation and in allegiance to God's present and future reign.

The alternative community is called to an alternative economics as well. In the biblical worldview, economic justice is built on each person receiving what he or she needs so that right relationships are maintained or restored.

Hebrew law gave special attention to the needs of those without a Hebrew male head of household. These included the widow, the orphan and the alien. The law of Jubilee even allowed a leveling of economics every 50 years by commanding the restoration of family homesteads lost by debt (Leviticus 25).

The early church in Jerusalem likely adapted Jubilee law to an urban setting when it instituted the practice of sharing all goods in common (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). Even where the early church did not hold all goods together, it still practiced economic sharing. Paul collected money from the church in Macedonia for the needs of the church in Jerusalem. In numerous places, the Epistles urge Christians to share with the needy (e.g., Romans 12:13; Ephesians 4:28). Indeed, they even suggest that it is impossible for God's love to be in anyone who has the world's goods, sees a brother or sister in need yet refuses to help (1 John 3:17).

Alternative power: The church as holy nation also has an alternative understanding of power. The church takes its cues from Jesus. For Jesus, power was first of all from God. The power of God flowed trough Jesus (Luke 5:17; Mark 5:30). It could be seen especially in Jesus' healing of many people, but it was evident as well in his teaching "with authority." Jesus did "mighty works" both out of compassion for those who were suffering and as signs of the reign of God.

During his temptations in the wilderness, Jesus rejected the use of power for selfish reasons (feeding himself alone), for self-aggrandizement (being saved dramatically from the consequences of throwing himself down from the pinnacle of the temple) or for the ways of the "kingdoms of the world," which Satan claims are his to offer (Matthew 4:8-10).

Jesus himself practiced the nonviolent way of power he taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). When Judas led the soldiers to arrest him, Jesus did not resist violently. He even called Judas "friend" and told Peter to put away his sword (Matthew 26:50, 52). Then, on the cross, he asked God to forgive his executioners (Luke 23:34). Jesus met death by putting himself completely into the hands of God (Luke 23:46). God responded with a remarkable display of power—by raising Jesus from the dead on the third day. By this resurrection, the powers of death, destruction and violence were disarmed, and salvation from sin and from enemies was offered to everyone who would believe (Colossians 2:13-15).

The early Christians applied this rejection of violent power to their lives in the church. Paul instructed believers not to repay anyone evil for evil but instead to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:14-21). The book of 1 Peter gives Christ as an example of suffering without abusing or threatening in return (2:19-24). The early church applied this rejection of violence not only to murder and other such crimes but also to state-sanctioned violence, including military service. Loving power rather than violent power will win out in the end, in that day of a new heaven and a new earth, where justice and love triumph and when the righteous are resurrected to a new life with God.

The church today is also called to practice Jesus' kind of power, the power of love, of forgiveness, of working for right relationships. It is power that does not force anyone into the church. Instead, the church claims to be a people made up of those from around the world who have chosen to follow Christ. As such a nation, the church has no geographical boundaries to defend and therefore no need to use violent power to defend them.

Given cultures' tendency to demand ultimate allegiance to one or more of their powers, some kind of dissent is required if the church is to be genuinely missionary to the dominant culture.

Key points: The church as an alternative community can make a powerful witness when it chooses to live differently from the dominant society even at just a few key points. An important task of the church is to discern what are those key points at which to be different from the evil of the world. For some, the key point will be authentic community in the face of the individualism of the dominant culture. For others, that point will be community of goods in the face of the power of the profit motive. For others, that point will be a reminder of God's redeeming love for all, no matter what crimes they have committed, in the face of calls for the death penalty.

To discern those points of dissent is to be a missional church. Given cultures' tendency to demand ultimate allegiance to one or more of their powers, some kind of dissent is required if the church is to be genuinely missionary to the dominant culture. The church must be different from its surroundings in order to make visible and witness faithfully to the inbreaking reign of God.

Lois Barrett is executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. This article is adapted from Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, *edited by Darrell L. Guder (Eerdmans, 1998). Part three will appear in next week's issue.*

Kosovo refugees receive MCC assistance

AKRON, Pa.—Soap from Mennonite Central Committee is being distributed to families who fled their homes in Serbia's war-torn Kosovo province. And more MCC resources—comforters and refugee kits—are headed that way.

MCC partner Bread of Life on Oct. 7 delivered 300 hygiene kits, including the MCC soap, in Kosovo. Each family also received shampoo, detergent and clothing. Bread of Life, a humanitarian agency of evangelical churches in Belgrade, Serbia, intends to deliver more aid to the thousands of displaced people in the area.

NATO countries have threatened to bomb Serbia in an attempt to stop the war in Kosovo. An Oct. 12 accord has so far averted the bombing and guaranteed humanitarian agencies free access to Kosovo.

"Ironically, NATO's threats to bomb Serbia are an attempt to show that political peace cannot be achieved with violence," says Harold Otto, MCC worker with Bread of Life.

MCC workers in the region, after consulting with local partners, decided to stay in the region despite requests to evacuate. In early October, Western European governments and the United States asked their citizens to leave Serbia in preparation for NATO to carry out the threatened bombings. "Our presence is an incarnational one, not one that follows our interests and has us leave when the crowds of expatriates leave," says Hansuli Gerber, director of MCC's Europe programs.

MCC in mid-October sent a shipment of 12,800 comforters valued at $280,000 from Vancouver. The comforters will go to refugees from Kosovo who fled to Montenegro. MCC is also requesting 500 refugee kits by December. Refugee kits include shampoo, toothpaste, towels, some first-aid items and other toiletries.

In August, MCC sent a 40-foot container of used clothing to Albania for refugees from Kosovo and for the Albanians who are hosting them. In September, the church agencies in Albania that distributed the clothing sent MCC a letter, saying: "Your contributions of clothing were a wonderful surprise. The quality of this clothing was better than anything we had seen to date. ... We want to send our thanks."

Says Bread of Life staff member Beba Varga: "A Christian's best witness to unbelieving neighbors is calmness in the face of danger. We should never accept the … language of violence. Instead, we use the language of love."—*MCC News Service*

Church has century of cooperation

It is a congregation created on cooperation. Gortner United Church, Oakland, Md., was founded 100 years ago by five denominations: Mennonite, German Baptist (now Church of the Brethren), United Brethren, Lutheran and Methodist.

Today only the Church of the Brethren and Mennonites meet at Gortner, which celebrated its centennial in August. Until 1996, the two groups worshiped together and had one Sunday school, but each had its own constitution and church board. Offerings were received by the Mennonites on the first two Sundays of the month and by the Church of the Brethren on the third and fourth Sundays.

Gortner last year adopted a new constitution and is now affiliated with both the Church of the Brethren and Allegheny Conference of the Mennonite Church.—*Allegheny Conference News*

MCC to fund counseling for Kenya blast victims

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has given $5,000 to People for Peace, a Kenyan organization that is providing emergency family counseling to some of the thousands of people traumatized by the Aug. 7 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi.

Most available counseling is for individuals, but Joseph Ngala, head of People for Peace, wants to bring together eight to 10 families—30 to 40 people—for two to three days with specialists in psychology, psychiatry and religion. Ngala hopes MCC's funding will be adequate for at least three such sessions.

Ngala recognizes the importance of the immediate and extended family in East African culture. He also knows that in many families the first-born son carries financial responsibilities. When the oldest son dies, he leaves the family without an income and without guidance. Sometimes it becomes almost impossible for such families to reorganize their lives and move ahead.

More than 250 Kenyans died in the bombing, and more than 5,000 were hurt. Many of the injured have been permanently scarred, and pieces of glass and shrapnel remain embedded in their bodies. Some are now permanently disabled.

Erna Loewen-Rudgers, co-director of MCC's Kenya programs, reported that a student at her daughter's school was blinded, her face terribly scarred by the bombing. The other children take the blinded girl's hand and guide her around the school. In another tragic situation, a young widow who sold pastries was on a bus that passed by the embassy just as the explosion occurred. She died, and her eight children were orphaned and left without anyone to care for them.—*MCC News Service*

S.Andre Yoder-Harris

Bishops' move

The members of the newly created New York City Bishops Council—(left to right) Monroe J. Yoder, Billie Thompson, Michael Banks, Nicolas Angustia and Ray Pacheco—address in English and Spanish the 15th annual convention of the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches (NYCCMC), held Sept. 25-26 at Bronx Community College. The bishops council, made up of the two Atlantic Coast Conference overseers and three Lancaster Conference bishops in New York City, will serve the city's 16 Mennonite congregations, all of which are ACC or Lancaster members. One congregation is also a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Also during the weekend, the NYCCMC's newest ministry, addressing immigration issues, was introduced. The program will be operated in cooperation with Mennonite Central Committee East Coast office.

Ex-Bluffton student accused of setting dorm fire

BLUFFTON, Ohio—A former Bluffton College student is facing aggravated arson charges for a Sept. 24 residence hall fire that has left one student recuperating at home from burns suffered in the blaze.

In an Oct. 16 court appearance, Michelle Mattingly waived her right to a preliminary hearing and will go before a grand jury next month.

Mattingly is accused of setting the early-morning fire on the second floor hall of Bluffton's three-floor Ropp Annex. The entire residence hall of 83 people was evacuated. Residents of the first and third floors were able to return on Sept. 27. The second floor residents returned a week later. The cost of the fire's damage is not yet known.

Christina Andulics, Mattingly's roommate, was hospitalized for burns to her leg and hand and is recuperating at home in North Ridgeville, Ohio. Mattingly suffered minor injuries, and another 12 students were treated for smoke inhalation.

Mattingly has been dismissed from Bluffton in keeping with school policy.

"It's not a typical kind of thing that happens on a college campus," says Don Schweingruber, Bluffton vice president for enrollment management and student life. "Shock is the word."

Until they were able to return to Ropp Annex, the displaced students stayed with other students in on-campus housing.

"These kinds of incidents bring out the best in the campus," Schweingruber says. "There was a lot of concern and caring exhibited."
—*Rich Preheim*

Business links with Congo Mennonites growing

WINNIPEG—Mennonite businesspeople in Congo are getting help from Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) in forging new trade links. The connection began with used clothing but could expand to a range of other needed goods.

The businesspeople, who go by the name of Groupe Action Mennonite (GAM), asked MEDA to facilitate several container loads of clothing from an exporter in southern Ontario. The clothes sold out quickly on the open market in Congo.

Plans call for further shipments of one container per month. A brokerage fee is charged by MEDA Trade and Consulting, a for-profit arm of MEDA.

"These are substantial orders," says Jerry Quigley, director of trade services for MEDA. "A container of clothes is worth $35,000 U.S., so we're talking about potential trade worth nearly half a million dollars a year."

Quigley says the linkage could grow significantly as the Congo Mennonites look to North America to supply other goods. Two GAM representatives visited Ontario in June to explore shipments of automobile tires. Other possible goods include water filtration systems and a type of Canadian dried fish that is popular in Congo.

MEDA's connections with Congo go back to agricultural development projects in the 1970s. More recently, Mennonites from that country have attended MEDA's annual convention and have formed their own MEDA-like business association.—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

Men's organization changes for merger

One of the district groups of Mennonite Men, the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) men's organization, is no longer just a district group. Western District Conference Mennonite Men has drawn up a new constitution and changed its name to Mennonite Men of the Plains to include South Central Conference.

South Central men have in the past participated in Mennonite Men activities. But now they will have representation on the board of Mennonite Men of the Plains.

Groups from each of the U.S. GC and integrated area conferences plus the Conference of Mennonites in Canada make up Mennonite Men.—*Western District News*

Ten Thousand Villages exploring new business plan

SASKATOON—Recognizing the demands of serving as a retail operation in the marketplace, Ten Thousand Villages and Mennonite Central Committee are exploring new relationships between the two organizations, including more independence for Ten Thousand Villages while remaining under MCC's umbrella.

"We're not talking about leaving MCC," says Doug Dirks, director of Ten Thousand Villages in Canada. "What we're talking about is how do we work at Ten Thousand Village's mission as effectively as possible within MCC."

Although volunteers will remain the core of most stores' operations, Dirks says Ten Thousand Villages would like to be able to pay store managers a base salary with added incentive pay for store performance—something the current MCC pay structure doesn't allow. Furthermore, as the organization opens more stores in non-Mennonite areas, traditional MCC hiring requirements—such as church membership—might be too strict to find qualified people.

"That's one of the areas where we feel we need to operate a little differently from the traditional MCC mode," Dirks says.

The U.S. and Canada boards of Ten Thousand Villages met Sept. 18-19 in Saskatoon for their first joint meeting and recommended that a committee be appointed to study structural options over the next year.

"This is a recognition that Ten Thousand Villages is a business and therefore needs the latitude to make decisions based on business principles," says Marv Frey, executive director of MCC Canada. "We're saying we want to allow Ten Thousand Villages to do what they need to do, have freedom to solve their own problems while still being a help to them."

Ten Thousand Villages is MCC's nonprofit job-creation program, providing vital and fair income to Third World people by selling their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America. In the United States, about 400 stores sell Ten Thousand Villages products; 50 of those stores use the Ten Thousand Villages name and logo. In Canada, 29 stores use the name and logo, while another 14 stores sell Ten Thousand Villages products.

"We believe in order to accomplish the mission of helping as many artisans as possible we need to get into new communities to sell more products," Dirks says.

Ten Thousand Villages last year provided about 12,000 full-time equivalent jobs in 35 countries through the sale of handicrafts.
—MCC Canada News Service

Correction: The Mennonite World Conference Peace Council meets in conjunction with the MWC General Council, not the executive committee as reported in "Mennonite World Conference Peace Study OK'd" in the Oct. 6 issue of *The Mennonite.*

MMA photo

A banner day

Dean Preheim Bartel, Mennonite Mutual Aid manager of advocacy programs (right), presents a banner to Cindy Drew and her daughter Anna of Salem Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio, in recognition of Salem becoming the first to receive MMA's Welcoming Congregation designation. The presentation was made Sept. 27 at Salem. The MMA Welcoming Congregation program supports churches in becoming more open to people with mental illness or disabilities. Salem recently expanded its facilities, including adding a wheelchair-accessible restroom, elevator and chairlift.

Peace grants awarded

ELKHART, Ind.—The Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee has awarded $6,750 to nine congregations and one conference for locally based peace initiatives.

Among the projects to be supported by this year's Spread the Peace grants are a new victim offender program in Mineral County, W.Va.; a tutoring program in Meridian, Miss.; a new peace center in Saginaw, Mich.; and peace training in Aibonito, Puerto Rico.

Grant recipients are Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.; Pinto (Md.) Mennonite Church; Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss.; First Mennonite Church, Richmond, Va.; Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana, Ohio; Jubilee Mennonite Church, Bellefontaine, Ohio; St. Louis (Mo.) Mennonite Fellowship; Ninth Street Mennonite Church, Saginaw, Mich.; West Clinton Mennonite Church, Pettisville, Ohio; and Puerto Rico Conference.
—MC General Board

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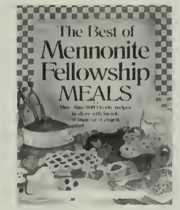

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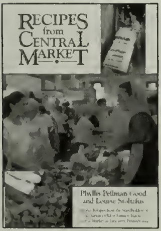
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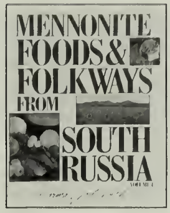

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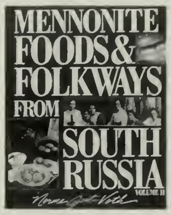

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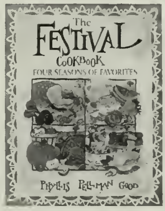

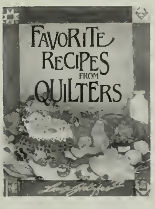

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Births

Bolton, Jill Renee, Oct. 10, to Lori (Derstine) and Todd Bolton, Souderton, Pa.
Buehler, Mason Anthony, Oct. 3, to Barb (Uttley) and Roger Buehler, Elmira, Ont.
Gaby, William Christopher, Oct. 3, to Chris and Tonya (Hunsberger) Gaby, Elkhart, Ind.
George, Isabella, Sept. 14, to Kent and Stacey (Dickel) George, Iowa City, Iowa.
Graber, Erin Michelle, Oct. 6, to DeLane (Miller) and Terry Graber, Goshen, Ind.
High, Trevor Bryce, Sept. 21, to Bryan and Melissa (Hostetter) High, Gap, Pa.
Hinh, Maymehorewe Thuy, Sept. 29, to Hai and Shirley (Unternahrer) Hinh, Wayland, Iowa.
Kanagy, Joseph Daniel, Oct. 4, to Lisa (Boller) and Steven Kanagy, Colorado Springs. Colo.
Kauffman, Teagan Maryann, Aug. 29, to Brent and Denise (Keefer) Kauffman, Wauseon, Ohio.
Kempf, Austin, July 28, to Diane (Rupp) and Mike Kempf, Pettisville, Ohio.
Kroeker, Katelynn June, Oct. 6, to Jodilynn (Wiseman) and Stephen Kroeker, Sierra Vista, Colo.
Martin, Micah Sensenig, Aug. 18, to Sheryl (Sensenig) and Steven Martin, Lancaster, Pa.
Peachey-Stoner, Reuben Joseph, Aug. 13, to Cheryl and Bob Peachey-Stoner, Hesston, Kan.
Pressel, Megan Grace, Aug. 22, to Debbie (Stone) and Kevin Pressel, Valparaiso, Ind.
Schrock, Hannah, July 20, to Dawn Schrock, Archbold, Ohio.
Short, Alexander Philip, Oct. 9, to Bradley and Rachel (Regier) Short, Archbold, Ohio.
Steiner, Annissa Elizabeth, Sept. 21, to Brent and Stephanie (Maxwell) Steiner, Apple Creek, Ohio.
Swartzendruber, Addie Rae, Oct. 6, to Brent and Tara (Siebert) Swartzendruber, Henderson, Neb.
Umble, Rebekah Quinn, Oct. 1, to Douglas and Karen (Krammer) Umble, Lititz, Pa.
Ward, Xavier, Oct. 2, to Abdul and Paige Ward, Freeman, S.D.
Weber, Alecia Marie, Oct. 2, to Gerald and Janet (Yantzi) Weber, Alma, Ont.
Wyse, Jessica Anne, Sept. 26, to Jenny (Litwiller) and Ken Wyse, Mackinaw, Ill.

Marriages

Aungst/Gehman: Hiram Aungst, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Grace Gehman, Port Trevorton, Pa., Oct. 4, by Paul Bender.
Bednar/Rotenberger: Richard Bednar Jr., and Jennifer Rotenberger, Quakertown, Pa., Oct. 10 by Jim Amstutz.
Beiler/Weaver: Stacy Beiler, Goshen, Ind., and Dan Weaver, Elkhart, Ind., Aug. 1, by Joseph Miller.
Benysh/Short: William Benysh, Wabash, Ind., and Toni Short, Wabash, July 24, by Earl Stuckey.
Boggs/Morgan: Cory Boggs, Wellston, Ohio, and Melissa Morgan, Jackson, Ohio, Sept. 13, by Jim and Isabel Mullett.
Brendle/Moyer: Christina Brendle, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Vernon Moyer, Powhatan, Va., Sept. 19, by Preston Nowlin.
Butcher/Lutz: Ellen Butcher, Quakertown, Pa., and Steve Lutz, Sept. 12, by Jim Amstutz.
Diller/Pankratz: Phil Diller, Hesston, Kan., and Kristie Pankratz, Hillsboro, Kan., Oct. 3, by Corey Miller.
Gindro/Huebert: Kathryn Gindro, Grand Junction, Colo., and Kory Huebert, Grand Junction, Oct. 10, by Bruce Crowell.
Graber/Ortman: Sherilyn Graber, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and William Ortman, Marion. S.D., Aug. 14, by Robert Engbrecht and Marc Hershberger.
Hull/Stuckey: Kirk Hull, Wauseon, Ohio, and Marcia Stuckey, Wauseon, Sept. 26, by Gary Blosser.
King/Smoker: Ada Nancy King, Atglen, Pa., and Vernon Smoker, Ronks, Pa., Aug. 15, by Elvin Ressler.
Kuepfer/Shantz: Holly Kuepfer, Wallenstein, Ont., and Kevin Shantz, Wallenstein, Oct. 3, by Willard Metzger.
Logue/Rose: Terry Logue, South Fork, Pa., and Beverly Rose, South Fork, Oct. 3, by Harold and Mary Grace Shenk.
Martin/Stuckey: Carrie Martin, Pioneer, Ohio, and Gregory Stuckey, Alvordton, Ohio, Aug. 22, by Earl Stuckey.
Ratzlaff/Stewart: Joni Ratzlaff, Henderson, Neb., and Jay Stewart, Blaire, Neb., Oct. 3, by Weldon Martens.
Short/Zolman: Michael Short, Archbold, Ohio, and Angie Zolman, Archbold, Oct. 17, by Ron Guengerich.
Thompson/Zook: Kevin Thompson, Pa., and Terri Zook, Pa., Sept. 26, by Max Zook and Ivan Yoder.

Deaths

Althaus, Gertrude Diller, 90, Bluffton, Ohio, died Oct. 3. Survivors: children Larry , Jerry, Gary; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 6 at Pandora, Ohio, by Douglas Luginbill.
Blosser, Vernon Floyd, 73, Newton, Kan., died Sept. 9. Survivors: wife, Alma; children Karen White, Joletha Horn, Vernon; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Sept. 12 at Hesston, Kan., by Michael Bogard and Louise Wideman.
Boegli, Clara Smucker, 104, Orrville, Ohio, died Sept. 30. Survivors: children Dick Smucker, Bob Smucker, Pauline Dulaney, Virginia Esh, Carol Powell, Julia Penner; stepdaughter Norma Jean Beck; 20 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; 6 great-great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 3 at Smithville, Ohio, by John and Barbara Lehman.
Freed, Donald, 37, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 25. Survivors: parents, Russell and Dorothy Freed. Burial: Sept. 30 at Franconia, Pa., by Floyd Hackman, John Ehst and Steven Landis.
Friesen, Huldah Myer Weiss, 87, Henderson, Neb., died Oct. 5. Survivors: stepson William; two grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 12 at Quakertown, Pa., by Jim Amstutz.
Gerber, Clyde, 75, Millersburg, Ohio, died Oct. 2. Survivors: wife, Gladys; children Ronald, Vanessa Hershberger, Vicki Kaufman; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Oct. 5 at Millersburg by Carl Wiebe.
Godshall, Bessie Wambold, 94, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 4. Survivors: husband, Enos; children Richard, Robert, Merrill; 15 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 8 at Franconia, Pa., by Steven Landis and Floyd Hackman.
Gugel, Shaun, 16, Wauseon, Ohio, died Sept. 11 from an auto accident. Survivors: parents, Dave and Julie Gugel. Burial: Sept. 16 at Fayette, Ohio, by Gary Blosser.
Handrich, Ada May Shantz, 99, Fairview, Mich., died Oct. 1 of congestive heart failure. Survivors: children Luella Esch, Richard, Olive Gerber, Harry, Jean Hoover; 29 grandchildren; 57 great-grandchildren; two great-great grandchidren. Burial: Oct. 5 at Fairview by Virgil Hershberger and Randy Detweiler.
King, Glenford, 74, Wauseon, Ohio, died Sept. 2 of cancer. Survivors: wife, Ruth; children Darrel, Roland, Karen Burkholder, Lanita Boyers. Burial: Sept. 5 at Pettisville, Ohio, by Gary Blosser.
Martin, Eileen Martin Frey, 70, Elmira, Ont., died Sept. 18. Survivors: husband, Amsey; children Carolyn Shoemaker, Rosanne Horst; six grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 21 at Floradale, Ont., by Fred Redekop.
Martin, Elmer, 84, Kitchener, Ont., died Aug. 26. Burial: Aug. 30 at Floradale, Ont., by Fred Redekop.
Mierau, Arthur, 78, Henderson, Neb., died Oct 2. Survivors: wife, LeVina; children Randy, Milan, Judy Epp; nine grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 5 at Henderson by Marcia Yoder-Schrock.
Mullett, Roy A., 84, Berlin, Ohio, died Oct. 2. Survivors: wife, Alta; children Maurice, Juanita Miller, Betty Lou Clark, Marlin; 15 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 6 at Berlin by Ernest Hershberger.

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Regier, Wilma Friesen, 77, Henderson, Neb., died Sept. 30. Survivors: husband, Jacob; son Calvin; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Burial: Oct. 2 at Henderson by Marcia Yoder-Schrock.

Sala, Carrie, 93, Somerset, Pa., died Aug. 30. Survivors: step-children Robert, Ammon Jr., Bernice Miller. Burial: Sept. 1 at Johnstown, Pa., by Harold and Mary Grace Shenk.

Sell, Artna, 75, Coopersburg, Pa., died Sept. 11. Burial: Sept 15 at Quakertown, Pa., by Jim Amstutz.

Smith, Esther Oyer, 95, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 10. Burial: Sept. 12 at Ashley, Mich., by Joseph Miller, Marvin Yoder and Joe Pendleton.

Thomas, Paul, 77, Hollsopple, Pa., died Sept. 15 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Martha; children Marvin, Stanwin, Dale; eight grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 18 at Thomas Mills, Pa., by Wayne Lasure.

Yousey, Norman, 80, Akron, N.Y., died Sept. 5. Survivors: wife, Mary; children Kathleen Bower, Terrance, Joanne Matusek, Marlene McCollister; 10 grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 9 at Williamsville, N.Y., by Roy Walls Jr.

classifieds

- **Johnstown Christian School** is seeking a ***high school principal*** (full-time) and a ***high school math teacher*** (part-time). For information, call Linda Gundlach at 814-288-2588.

- **Maplewood Mennonite Church** is seeking ***1/3-time music director*** with some worship planning responsibilities. Send resumes to Maplewood Mennonite Church, 4129 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815.

- **New Holland Mennonite Church** is seeking a half-time ***associate pastor.*** If interested, send your resume to Mary Y. Rittenhouse, New Holland Mennonite Church, 18 Western Ave., New Holland, PA 17557.

- **Bethany Christian Schools** (grades 6-12; enrollment 300) invites applications for the position of ***admissions counselor*** (3/4-time). Please submit a resume and letter of application to Allan Dueck, principal, Bethany Christian Schools, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. For information, call Allan Dueck at 219-534-2567.

- **Mennonite Voluntary Service** is seeking a half-time ***administrator*** responsible for MVS unit administration and recruitment coordination. The person must have a vision for following the way of Jesus in service, strong communication skills and be open to travel. Please contact us at 316-283-5100; email mvs@gcmc.org.

- **Hesston College** seeks a ***campus pastor***, a full-time nine-month position. The campus pastor is responsible for all religious life programming and functions as a spiritual resource to students, faculty and staff. Mennonite college experience and degree from a Mennonite seminary preferred. Interviews begin in January. Position available mid-August 1999.

  Apply to Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email CharH@hesston.edu, or call 316-327-8234 for more information.

- **Upward Call Counseling Service** Professional counseling with a Christian foundational premise that God unfailingly desires relationship with us who unfailingly need restoration. Counseling with individuals, couples, families; adults and children. Consultation to Mennonite, Wenger Mennonite, Horning Mennonite and Amish ministers who have members needing additional professional counseling.

  For further information, contact Robert Weaver, LSW, BCD, director, Upward Call Counseling Services, 150 E. Franklin St., New Holland, PA 17557; 717-355-2117.

- **Hesston College** needs a ***resident director*** for men's residence hall. The resident director will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff; assist in enforcement of campus standards. Qualifications: strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite Church, leadership ability, listening and relational skills. Two-year commitment minimum. Bachelor's degree preferred.

  Apply to Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email CharH@hesston.edu, or call 316-327-8234 for information. Application deadline Nov. 6, 1998. Position available Jan. 4, 1999.

- **South Hutchinson Mennonite Church** (Kansas) seeks an ***associate pastor*** to join the present staff consisting of lead pastor and youth pastor. Qualified candidates need to be energetic, spiritually mature and people-oriented, committed to church growth and community outreach. Pastoral training and related experience are required with emphasis on counseling ministries, teaching skills and facilitating small group life and fellowship.

  For additional details, questions or application, contact Don Lind, search committee chair, 316-662-7201 or 316-663-4244; South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505.

- **Dock Woods Community**, a not-for-profit continuing care retirement community sponsored by the Franconia Mennonite Conference, is currently seeking a ***full-time chaplain.*** The position is responsible for providing residents with spiritual guidance and assistance. The chaplain coordinates, plans and conducts worship services, devotions and prayer meetings for Dock Woods Community. In addition, the chaplain is responsible for visiting and spiritual counseling of residents. Requirements for the position include a seminary degree and three units of clinical pastoral education.

  Interested applicants should contact the Human Resources Department at 215-368-4438.

- **Souderton Mennonite Homes,** a growing continuing care retirement community, is seeking a ***full-time pastor*** and a ***part-time associate pastor.*** Key responsibilities will include the assessment and ongoing nurture of our residents' spiritual needs through visitation, leading groups and planning and leading worship services. The ability to team with other staff members and to develop linkages with home church pastors is vital.

  Interested individuals should fax resume with salary requirements to 215-723-9876, attn. Lisa Peirce; or mail resumes to Souderton Mennonite Homes, 207 W. Summit St., Souderton, PA 18964.

- **Eastern Mennonite University** seeks the following positions:

  Social work: MSW required, doctorate preferred. Specialization: human behavior and social environment, and five years of social work practice.

  English: Ph.D. required. Specialization: American literature, composition and creative writing, early English literature or Spanish literature.

  Business: Ph.D. required. Specialization: finance and/or operations/quantitative management required. Competence: marketing, industry and computer experience.

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  EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices.

  Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to William Hawk, VP and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email dean@emu.edu. Review will begin Dec. 1, 1998. AAEO employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

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The church needs to present an alternative to military solutions

by Gerald Biesecker-Mast and J. Denny Weaver

As we write, the government of the United States appears once again to be preparing the nation to support military action in the name of peace. The immediate situation is the massacre of Albanian nationals in the area of Kosovo by Serbian nationals. The minority Albanians, who are apparently at great disadvantage, appear to be the victims of malicious ethnic cleansing by the militarily superior Serbians.

The answer seems clear: Introducing American or NATO military forces into the situation, first air power and eventually ground troops, would save lives by defending the Albanians from the Serbs. We fervently hope that military action is avoided and more lives and treasure are not expended by any of the sides in this tragedy. But however the situation has evolved by the time these words are printed, we offer the following comments on how the peace church should respond to military actions in the name of peace.

The scenario of military intervention for peace is one the United States has appealed to several times in recent years in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Haiti and in Somalia. Members of the peace churches have given a variety of responses.

One tempting answer is to accept this particular military solution. We will not be abandoning our historic peace position, some may argue, and we will not actively support the military presence. Rather, in recognition of the fact that military activity will save lives, we would merely refrain from issuing statements that oppose the use of military forces or that express our belief that guns and military might do not solve problems. And if the situation were right, we might cooperate with the military forces in distributing relief aid to war sufferers. In this case, a major part of the argument is that the peace church and Mennonites in particular have no better solution to offer. How can we sit on the sidelines and issue statements against military involvement when we have no workable alternative to propose and when military involvement would appear to save Albanian lives?

That answer reveals a general acquiescence to the American faith in violence to solve problems. (See "The Mythical Society," *The Mennonite,* June 23.) One dimension of that acquiescence is the acceptance of the American framing of the question.

The assumption is that a mere handful of pacifists dropped into the middle of an enormous conflict would obviously be unable to solve it. Therefore, the logic goes, since the pacifists cannot solve the problem and have no better alternative to propose, the only remaining response must be to accept the military intervention as the better option.

However, peace church people ought to see some other dimensions to the question. It is not fair to pose a few pacifists against a large military force when contemplating the problem. Further, the few pacifists do not benefit from the years of training and the billions of dollars worth of equipment the military has at its disposal. A fairer question is to ask how an expeditionary force of nonviolent activists (of the size of the anticipated military force) with several years of training in intercultural studies, linguistics, psychology, mediation skills and conflict resolution skills and possessing virtually unlimited access to the latest in electronic technology and communications equipment would deal with the conflict.

Posing this fairer version of the question shows how little thought the United States has given to the avoidance of military conflict. For all the official rhetoric about defense and about desires for peace, the entire military operation of the United States is geared toward war preparation, and the national psyche is geared toward preparing for and expecting war.

This version of the question also raises a disturbing mirror to Mennonite churches. It shows how little thought the peace church has given to such questions. Although we have wanted to be a peace church and have claimed that the peaceful gospel of Jesus Christ touch-

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es all dimensions of life, we have given little thought to international conflict. By and large, we have accepted the definition of problems that our national governments or the United Nations have wanted us to accept.

Our pattern of churchwide spending shows how little we have thought about such things. During World War II, Mennonites spent about $3 million to fund the Civilian Public Service program during its seven years of existence. Today that would be more than $23 million. Would Mennonites today be willing to commit $23 million in the next seven years to develop a nonviolent, interventionist program rather than rationalizing support for the U.S. military? Apparently not. Note that in cost-cutting moves several years ago, the General Board of the Mennonite Church removed support for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and New Call to Peacemaking from its budget. This cut has since been restored, and the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church each support CPT at a level of $2,000 per year. The Friends and Church of the Brethren denominations support CPT at a similar level.

As Christians we are never able to justify intentional use of violence. The peace church should not have to debate whether to support a military peacekeeping operation. If violence is antithetical to the story of Jesus Christ, then we do not need to ask about the efficacy of supporting the introduction of more guns into a setting where guns are already the problem.

Some will no doubt argue that ruling out in advance any willing support for military action and the use of guns is idealist, a call for withdrawal into a renewed sectarianism. We beg to differ. If the peace church really became engaged in an effort to find an alternative to military intervention in situations like Kosovo, that effort would not go unnoticed. It would show not only the U.S. government but also the entire world that guns are not necessary to solve problems. Such an effort would be a marvelous evangelistic witness to the way of the reign of God and a call to join the reign of God rather than to continue in the violence of the world.

As an interim step we can at least offer the Clinton administration some alternative ways to spend the $100 million that the initial invasion would cost. For example, how many schools and teachers, hospitals, doctors and nurses could be made available to Albanians and Serbs for $100 million? Would a nonviolent expeditionary force to implement such projects have a better chance of establishing and maintaining a real peace than an army confronting another army? Why aren't we making that case instead of rationalizing support for one more U.S. military invasion?

To be sure, we are not arguing that the church should take responsibility for the dilemmas of U.S. foreign policy. As John Howard Yoder insisted, the church is called to be the church, not to be in charge of the world. However, we are suggesting that a witness for Jesus' nonviolent love, even in the midst of bloody conflict, is indeed the business of the church. The violence in Kosovo and in every troubled nation, community or neighborhood is an occasion that demands the church's faithful witness, not compromised acquiescence, to the principalities and power that rule our age.

Although we have wanted to be a peace church and have claimed that the peaceful gospel of Jesus Christ touches all dimensions of life, we have given little thought to international conflict.

Gerald Biesecker-Mast is assistant professor of communication, and J. Denny Weaver is professor of religion and chair of the department of history and religion, at Bluffton (Ohio) College

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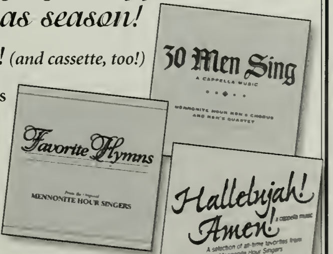
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Gordon Houser

Faithful churches in a culture of death

As we seek to be faithful to Jesus' call to be salt and light in our world, we must look at the context in which we live. Our churches, our congregations, are political bodies. These are political because within them we make decisions about how we relate to one another and how we relate to society. Yet our politics are to be different from the partisan political games played around us.

In her article "A Holy Nation" (page 6), Lois Barrett writes that "the church is to have a different political identity from the people around it." Our identity comes from our Lord, who brought good news of God's reign. Our confession of faith, using many biblical terms to describe the identity of the church, says, "The church is called to live and minister as Christ lived and ministered in the world." We look to Jesus, to the Scriptures, to the church throughout its history for guidance.

How we are different from the world depends partly on how we view the world. Do we recognize, for example, that we live in the midst of a culture of violence and death? How does that affect our being faithful?

How we are different from the world depends partly on how we view the world.

Our view of faithfulness is distorted by how comfortable we may feel in our culture. Like a fish looking for water, we fail to see the violence and death around us because of their pervasiveness. Every day we encounter stories and images of death in the media. But what about the things we don't see or hear about in the mainstream media?

Hiroshima bombs: For example, the Brookings Institution recently issued a report revealing that since 1940 the United States has spent $5.8 trillion on nuclear weapons. As Robert Drinan points out in the Oct. 16 *National Catholic Reporter*, "We have spent more money on nuclear weapons than any civilization in history has ever spent on anything." And we keep spending $35 billion per year on them. Drinan asks, "Why does the United States still need weapons with the explosive force of some 120,000 Hiroshima bombs?"

The same newspaper includes an article about Amnesty International's latest campaign, which focuses on human rights violations in the United States. The London-based human rights organization has released a 153-page report that details cases of police brutality and violence against prisoners, among other violations of international standards. The report notes that the United States has the largest prison population in the world (1.7 million) and the highest known death row population (3,300). It also says that while "black and white people are the victims of violent crime in roughly equal numbers, 82 percent of people executed since 1977 have been convicted of killing white victims."

Key points: How is the church to be an "alternative community" (in Lois' term) in such a context? What can a small group of people do in the face of such an overwhelming force? We may need to discern at which "key points" (another of Lois' terms) our particular congregation should live differently.

Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas, for example, has decided to be an anti-racist congregation (page 4). Members want to focus on dissenting from a racist society by being an anti-racist light that reflects God's reign.

Gerald Biesecker-Mast and J. Denny Weaver remind us (page 14) that as a peace church we should not fall prey to the common assumptions of our broader culture in international relations. While many look for a military solution in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere, we are called to pursue a different way, one that reflects the way of Jesus.

My congregation is involved in the LIFE (Living in Faithful Evangelism) process. We are trying to discern how we are to be a "missional church." How does God want us to be different from the surrounding culture of death and reflect the God of life?

Each of our congregations—and our larger Mennonite church—needs to answer a similar question. We need to look at ourselves and at the world around us and make sure we are not seeing a mirror image. And we need to look to our Lord and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance for how to be a faithful, missional presence in the North American landscape.—*gh*

the Mennonite

November 3, 1998

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a community of healing

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Playing the game

Thank you for publishing Nina Forsythe's poem "How the Deck Is Stacked in the Mennonite Game" (Oct. 6). As an Anabaptist convert, I have often been welcomed as I have journeyed among Mennonites across North America in drama troupes, as a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and in pastoral roles. I (of Celtic and Slavic heritage) have also had the unfortunate experience of never really feeling part of the family due to the dominant ethnocentric nature of the denomination and its congregations. In the discussion of the creation of the new Mennonite Church, more needs to be said about the ethnic lodge nature of too much of the denomination, which creates barriers to the inclusive message of God's love in Jesus Christ.—*Gary Olsen-Hasek, Portland, Ore.*

I was deeply moved by "How the Deck Is Stacked in the Mennonite Game." I grieve for all those who sense that they are "of the wrong name and the wrong parentage," who feel that they "remain a stranger in the family." But the poem also offered me a sense of hope: the image of drowning ourselves (and our identities, including ethnic heritage) for the Anabaptist vision (personal faith in Christ incorporating us into a new people). Thank you, sister Nina, for your words of challenge and invitation.—*Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Elkhart Ind.*

Advertising opposition

This concerns the full-page ad by the Far East Broadcasting Co. in the Oct. 13 issue. While I think it is fine to be ecumenical and to cooperate on site with various like-minded agencies, I draw the line at fund raising. When our small church is so limited in resources, why do we want an outside agency to have direct access to our entire constituency? It's bad enough that some of our church agencies sell their mailing lists to other groups. I hope not to see such ads in our denominations' official periodical again in my lifetime.—*Helen R. Tieszen, Sioux Falls, S.D.*

Watch your language

I was taken aback by "Homeless in Seattle" (Oct. 6). As one who is involved in advocacy for those with mental illness and as one who has a mental illness, I was shocked at the repeated references to "the mentally ill."

A fundamental struggle of those with mental illness is the incorporating of mental illness into one's identity. An important step toward recovery is the expulsion of mental illness from identity. Therefore, I am not mentally ill, but I have a mental illness. The language of the article is grossly insensitive and backward.

Further, if it is enlightened to keep those with mental illness in institutions, then I am glad I don't live in Germany. Fortunately, I live in an area that tries to integrate people with mental illness into the community. Sometimes this requires supports of various kinds, but it is done nevertheless.

This is obviously an area which is in need of exploration by the church. It is my hope that, in the future, language will be more carefully chosen when writing about mental illness in any context.—*Phil Fuller, St. Paul, Minn.*

Serving and working

"Living, Learning, Serving" (Oct. 6) is a good reminder to continually seek to live responsibly, whether it is through long-term voluntary service or by making appropriate choices in the use of regular earnings. It's also important for those of us who have done voluntary service work to remember that it would be impossible to do so without the financial contributions of those earning wages.—*Phyllis and Bill Miller, White Pigeon, Mich.*

Affirmation and encouragement

I have not always been in agreement with many of the articles in *The Mennonite*, but I read them to keep abreast of the thinking of the broader Mennonite church. I have refrained from registering my concern regarding some articles, and now instead I feel constrained to comment affirmatively on Richard Bowman's article, "Coming to Terms With Who I Am" (Sept. 22). I affirm this type of message that reminds us of the basics of the Christian life. —*Lester Blank, Gap, Pa.*

Line of reason

In the Oct. 6 Readers Say, Martha F. Graber reasons that homosexuality is simply another acceptable way for mutually consenting adults to choose to express love. James L. Peachey then reasons that neither heterosexual nor homosexual orientation can be chosen and therefore cannot be morally judged. The first bows to the god of human choice, the second to human nature. Since when did human choice or human orientation become the authoritative word on morality?

Following this logic, if I am oriented toward

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readers say

lust, greed, envy, deceit or unforgiveness, should not the church accept these as alternative lifestyles? We could reason that these are only personal choices or that I can't help it—it's just the way I am.—*I. Keith Miller, Chesapeake, Va.*

Look at ourselves first

It's easy to pick an isolated incident and point at discrimination in someone else's backyard. That is how I read Rich Preheim's editorial "Another Home Run for Racism" (Oct. 6). The secular media has had a heyday in the past quarter century in attacking discrimination, especially racism in sports. I am puzzled by the church media adding its editorial voice to these popular attacks. The church, by pointing its finger at discrimination in baseball, is inviting a response that says, "Take a look in your own backyard."

I challenge Preheim to investigate and take a stand on discriminatory issues in the church. Two examples:

1. The Conference of Mennonites in Canada has not allowed the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns and other lesbian and gay support groups a presence inside the annual conference site for the past several years. Of a more subtle nature, I know of several families in Lancaster County who have been shunned by their own Mennonite congregations for being parents or siblings of declared gays.

2. How about economic discrimination? Are homeless families or families living in local shelters welcome in our churches? Would they be comfortable sitting in our church pews on a Sunday morning? Do members of our churches seek out homeless and poor people as friends?

Let's clean up our own house before we point fingers at others for not living up to our standards and values.—*John Pauls, Akron, Pa.*

Cover photo
by Heartland Farm

A community of Catholics
and Mennonites seeks the healing
of land and people.

Heartland Farm

by Ted Lewis

When the Dominican Sisters of Great Bend, Kan., envisioned a community that would join religious and lay people, they never thought the lay portion would be filled by so many Mennonites. But with ecumenical openness from the start, the sisters who gave birth to Heartland Farm have been happy to share their vision with Mennonite folk. Together they have built a place that promotes the healing of the land and the healing of people.

I have been at Heartland Farm for almost three years, and it is wonderful to share life with Catholic sisters. With eight adults and five children, we are a faith-based community, offering retreat ministry and experiential learning for those who stay with us. The farm offers us the chance to practice our faith in every aspect of life. But it's also important to us to be involved in various local churches in the area. And one big reason for Mennonite participation in this organic farm community is the presence of Bergthal Mennonite Church, only six miles away, near Pawnee Rock.

One big reason for Mennonite participation in this organic farm community is the presence of Bergthal Mennonite Church, only six miles away.

Larry Mann Hesed and Laurie Wilson Hesed, who met at Koinonia Farm in Georgia, joined the Heartland community in its first year, 1988. Their resolve to stay long-term was strengthened by the support they received from Bergthal members. This support, however, extended far beyond encouragement. A number of elderly members came to the farm to help the Heseds with construction work and meals. Ruth Deckert fondly recalls when she pounded nails to put up cedar siding on one of the farm houses.

When Nancy, my wife, and I were looking for a rural intentional community in 1995, the Mennonite connection at Heartland was a big drawing card. During a previous inner-city community experience, we were involved in a Mennonite church and a Catholic women's shelter. Heartland Farm not only wove these two elements together but gave us a chance to learn about sustainable living and organic gardening.

After our arrival, we were delighted with an unexpected blessing out here in the fields of Kansas. Our first Sunday at Bergthal happened to be Muriel Thiessen Stackley's first Sunday as pastor of our church. In many ways, she and other members of Bergthal are part of our community's extended family. Some come for a massage at the farm, given by one of the sisters; others come for special gatherings; others have received vegetables from us. And if it weren't for Maxlyn Schmidt, our community would not be signing so many letters for Amnesty International.

Work and service: Many communities are often distinguished by a single thrust of ministry or work. But Heartland Farm has always encouraged adults to discern their own sense of calling and to pursue their own avenues of work and service. Sources of income from nearby towns include nursing and chaplaincy work, running a victim-offender reconciliation program and providing experiential art as a form of therapy. Along with massage work at the farm, we grow alfalfa and vegetables organically, and we have a gift shop with one-of-a-kind items.

A volunteer program has also attracted people with Mennonite backgrounds to the farm.

Unexpected blessing in the fields of Kansas:
Members of Heartland Farm cut firewood.

In the past two years, four students from Goshen (Ind.) College and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., have come for one to three months. They come to Kansas because the farm offers volunteers a relaxed atmosphere to learn about community life, to work in the gardens and to witness a simplified lifestyle.

Last year a young woman from Switzerland visited the farm for a couple of weeks and ended up staying for a full, life-changing year. In many ways, Gabriela Sporri's experience reveals the deepest and best aspects of what Heartland Farm offers. With a history of health problems and family instability, Gabriela landed in a place where wholesome food and unconditional love surrounded her.

As she grew in self-esteem, she weighed the merits of the new values and beliefs that were modeled to her by our community. Like many European youth, she had little interest in Christianity, let alone going to a church. But she found something new and special at Heartland Farm and at Bergthal Mennonite Church. After a weekend at Camp Mennoscah, a Mennonite camp, she wanted to let people know about the spiritual birthing process unfolding within her.

It was beautiful for me and others to see, like watching a flower bud open up. Having latched on to a John Denver song ("Annie's Song"), she wrote her own words to the last verse as a testimony of her newfound love for God. When I recall the time she sang it to the church, with her distinctively high, clear-as-a-bell voice, it still makes tears well up within me. Jesus had won her heart.

Spiritual rejuvenation: Before returning to Switzerland, Gabriela, who lives near Zurich, asked if she could be baptized in the Mennonite church. Again, she wanted to outwardly give witness to the transformation that was taking place within her. Everyone at the farm affirmed that Gabriela's spiritual rejuvenation was central to her decision.

After Muriel baptized her, Gabriela again sang her love song to God for us. It was a moving service. In less than a week, Gabriela was on a plane to Switzerland with dreams of working for Mennonite Central Committee in India or Thailand.

Her departure left an empty spot in the community. We felt like parents watching their first child go off to college. We were all aware of the many ways God had used our community to nurture her. (I can still see her delight in eating a huge bowl of lettuce and spinach; it was a privilege for me to make sure that during the winter, salad foods were growing in cold frames.) But all of us were also aware of her keen gift of discerning what she truly liked and believed. And Gabriela knew it was time to move on with her life.

Mennonites have not been the only folks attracted to Heartland Farm. Many Catholic lay people and people from Protestant churches have come here to visit, to volunteer or to have a retreat. People with different faith backgrounds or those who are openly searching have also been welcomed to stay with us to find rest, healing or spiritual direction.

The farm offers volunteers a relaxed atmosphere to learn about community life, to work in the gardens and to witness a simplified lifestyle.

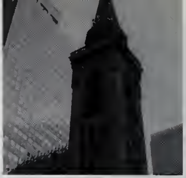
Overall, the type of ecumenicity we aspire to affirms Christian unity while respecting and preserving the diversity of Christian traditions. There are many historical threads of spirituality that stem from the person of Jesus Christ, and when those threads find themselves braided together, the result can be a beautiful affirmation of Jesus' prayer in John 17: "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Ted Lewis lives and works at Heartland Farm, near Great Bend, Kan.

Heartland Farm

Before returning to Switzerland, Gabriela (at left) asked if she could be baptized in the Mennonite church. She wanted to outwardly give witness to the transformation that was taking place within her.

Community as mission



The church as apostle to the world—part 3

by Lois Barrett

How Christians behave toward one another, the testimony that their relationships make in the public square, and the character of their life together as a whole community are integral to their apostolic mission.

Key images of God's alternative community, the missional church, are found in the Gospels' descriptions of the people of God as "the salt of the earth," a "light of the world" and a "city set on a hill." These images suggest that mission is not just what the church does; it is what the church is. The visible, taste-able nature of their community is their missional purpose: By encountering that "holy nation," others "may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

In North America, what might it mean for the church to be such a city on a hill? to be salt? to be a light to the world? It means, first of all, that the inner, communal life of the church matters for mission. Instead of separating the work of particular congregational communities or the church in general into mission and nurture, the total life of the "people sent" makes a difference to its apostolic witness. How Christians behave toward one another, the testimony that their relationships make in the public square, and the character of their life together as a whole community are integral to their apostolic mission.

Such witness means that the woman who has been part of the small urban congregation for three or four years can say to her pastor, "One of the things I have learned here is that you can disagree and you don't have to leave." Such witness also means that one's seatmate in an airplane, after learning your church affiliation, will exclaim, "Oh, I've heard of you. You're the people who are always there to clean up after tornadoes and floods."

The more accurately the church locates the key points of difference between its surrounding culture and that culture called for by the reign of God, the more faithfully the church lives a distinctively holy life in its place. And the more the church lives such distinctive faithfulness, the more visible the reign of God will be for all to see. The church that preaches equality with most of the other institutions in a society may be faithful to the gospel message but hardly visible. But if particular communities of the church demonstrate by their life together that different races and genders can be brothers and sisters in Christ, sharing leadership and responsibility, then they will be not only a faithful but also a visible city on a hill. In like manner, churches that listen to sermons deploring crime may be faithful in attending to God's call for right relationships among humanity. But the church that sets up victim-offender reconciliation programs and promotes equitable economic opportunities for communities where crime is the main escape route from financial despair is not only faithful but also a light to the world, a city on a hill.

It can be risky for the church to be different. The dominant culture has little tolerance for those who do not play by its rules. Jesus cautioned the Twelve about this risk when he sent them out on their first missionary journey, forewarning them that their witness could get them hauled into court and into conflict with their own families (Matthew 10:1–11:6).

Sharing the suffering of Jesus: "You are sharing Christ's sufferings" (1 Peter 4:13). The church as holy nation lives according to the way of the cross. The Christendom-style church, whether liberal or conservative, has often employed theology to avoid living the way of the cross. In North America, this view usually translates into a core doctrine that Jesus died on the cross so that people's sins could be forgiven, that whoever believes on him will be saved. In this case, "believing" usually means thinking the right things about Jesus or agreeing that what he said and did is true. Once you believe, then discipleship supposedly follows, but acting like Jesus is commonly seen as secondary to believing or changing one's attitude.

But this aspect is only half the gospel. Believing is also a matter of doing. Believing is trusting that Jesus' way of living is the right way, and trusting it enough that one is willing to live that way—and die that way.

"So that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:13). Suffering with Christ makes sense only if you know who wins at the end of the story. When one knows that God will have the final victory, then suffering along the way is put into a larger perspective. Sharing Christ's suffering comes as a package with sharing Christ's resurrection glory.

Risky witness depends on resurrection faith and faithfulness. It depends on God rearranging things at the end of the age so that God's justice and God's peace prevail and so that the new community, the new Jerusalem, is fully established. Thus the church that lives in the way of Christ is, in its being, a sign of the reign of God.

The Synoptic Gospels identify three main tasks of Jesus before his crucifixion: preaching, teaching and healing. These activities are also the vocation of Jesus' disciples. Repeatedly Jesus told the disciples that his work was also their work. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19). The Book of Acts is testimony to the fact that Jesus' followers continued his work of preaching, teaching and healing. That apostolic work still belongs to the church 2,000 years later.

Healing: The apostolic work of healing is intended to draw people into the reign of God by a demonstration of God's love and compassion. "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you," Jesus said (Luke 11:20). The Gospel of John portrays Jesus' healings as "signs" that God is at work in Jesus, signs that will draw people to Jesus. Likewise, in our time, healing is one of the characteristics of the missional church.

It is right to see healing in its broad sense: healing of the emotions, forgiveness of sin, peace, reconciliation, freedom, and restoration of justice and right relationships, as well as physical healing. But it is important to realize that healing in the missional church will go against the grain of many expectations in the dominant culture.

The first healing task of the church is to become a reconciled and reconciling community itself. From that base, the missional church works in the world to show God's love and compassion to others outside the church. God's love is too great to be kept only within the church; it has to be shared.

The missional church is called not only to demonstrate healing among its own members but also to be a peacemaker and justice-maker in the world. The church is called to promote peace to those near and to those far off (Ephesians 2:17 with 2 Corinthians 5:28-10). Where such healing happens, it is a sign of the nearness of the reign of God and an invitation into that reign.

Announcing the reign of God: The New Testament word for "preaching" is a political word. It means to "announce" or "proclaim publicly." It was sometimes used in a political context when an official runner came into town ahead of the ruler with the message, "The king is coming!" To preach, then, is to announce public good news for the community.

Jesus' public good news is summarized in Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." Paul and the early church continued this proclamation of the reign of God (cf. Acts 28:31).

While the proclamation could be the catalyst for dramatic conversions of individuals, its focus was not on the fate of the individual soul or on self-actualization but on God. Making public announcements about the actions of God and the reign of God is an apostolic task of the church. Ephesians 3:10 claims that it is through the church that the wisdom of God is made known to the rulers and authorities.

Announcing the reign of God in public will have an impact on individuals. Jesus' message was not only corporate but personal. Public announcements of God's actions in the world are a call to conversion, to turning around, to giving up idolatries and to placing one's loyalty in the one true God and God's reign.

The church's task of announcing the reign of God will mean moving beyond the four walls of the church building, out of the safe group of people who know and love each other, into the public square. The missional church will be in the world with good news.

Teaching for citizenship in the reign of God: Those who hear the good news and want to become citizens of the reign of God will need teaching. The church as holy nation has a culture, an accepted way of doing things, a specialized vocabulary to talk about life under the reign of God. The church should not expect new people in its midst to know these things automatically. Becoming a citizen of the reign of God does not come naturally. It requires a new loyalty to a new ruler. It demands that we acquire the new habits of a new culture.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) contains a summary of Jesus' teaching for the reign of God, the new practices that differ from the accepted wisdom ("You have heard that it was said ... ; but I say to you ... "). It is the constitution of the reign of God, or the manifesto for life under God's government. Within it, the Beatitudes (5:1-12) provide a summary within a summary of the behavior that belongs to the reign of God.

The Beatitudes bless behavior that differs greatly from that of the dominant culture. For example, the dominant culture says, "How fortunate you are if you have your life under control and do not need anyone else." Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," those who have the spirit of the poor, who know that they do not have their lives under control and need other people in order to make it.

Such teaching is not only for those entering the church but also for the continuing formation of Jesus' disciples within the church. Disciples, like ambassadors, sometimes become captive to the dominant culture into which Christ sends them.

To be sent out on behalf of the reign of God is also to gather people into the reign of God and, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to help form each other into citizens of the reign of God, who can preach, teach and heal in the name of Jesus and share his sufferings and resurrection life.

Becoming a citizen of the reign of God does not come naturally. It requires a new loyalty to a new ruler. It demands that we acquire the new habits of a new culture.

Lois Barrett is executive secretary for the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. This article is adapted from Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, *edited by Darrell L. Guder (Eerdmans, 1998).*

Colombian court's ruling should end dispute over military exemptions for seminary students

SANTAFE DE BOGOTA, Colombia—A conflict between the Colombian Mennonite seminary and the government regarding student military exemptions is apparently over following an Oct. 8 ruling by the country's Constitutional Court, which handed the school a significant victory.

According to Colombian law, seminary students—particularly those at Catholic seminaries—are exempt from military service. Since 1994, Hacedores de Paz, or Peacemakers, a program of Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Santafe de Bogota, has been providing an alternative for young men who did not want to serve in the military for reasons of conscience.

Starting last year, however, the military refused to grant military exemptions to Hacedores de Paz students. It was the most recent attempt to thwart the growing program. Justapaz, the peace and justice organization of the Colombian Mennonite Church, and supporters unsuccessfully fought the denials through the legal system until the Constitutional Court took up the case earlier this year.

The court ruled in favor of the students, saying the military must treat the seminary students of any religious entity in the same way it treats Catholic seminary students.

"It is an important change after so many years of struggling," says Andreiev Pinzon, a student at Mennonite Biblical Seminary. "I feel happy, but not just for myself. This is a very positive change that affects many people."

After Justapaz started Hacedores de Paz more than four years ago, the government initially granted military exemptions to the students. Under the law, students have their military service postponed upon entering seminary; students receive exemptions after one year of study.

As the number of Hacedores de Paz students increased, eventually topping 100, the government started issuing new requirements and restrictions. The government unsuccessfully tried to close the school in late 1996, claiming it did not meet educational standards. International pressure, mobilized by the Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Central Committee, which both support programs in Colombia, helped keep the seminary open.

According to the Constitutional Court's ruling, all current and future Hacedores de Paz students will obtain military postponement status upon entering the program and will ultimately receive their exemptions. The ruling is also viewed as a concrete step for other non-Catholic churches toward attaining equality in the Catholic-dominated country.—*Melanie Zuercher and Bonnie Klassen for GCMC and MCC news services*

> This is a very positive change that affects many people.
>
> —*Andreiev Pinzon*

Illinois libraries lacking no longer

The Peace and Service Committee of Meadows (Ill.) Mennonite Church recently did some browsing through five local city libraries to see what they had on Mennonites. Except for cookbooks and a local history book, the libraries were sadly lacking, the committee members discovered.

So to expand the libraries' holdings and to increase understandings of Mennonites and their beliefs, the committee provided the following books to the libraries: *How Mennonites Came to Be* by J.C. Wenger, *What Mennonites Believe* by J.C. Wenger, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* by C.J. Dyck, *History of Meadows Mennonite Church* by Steve Estes and *Peace Be With You* by Cornelia Lehn.—*Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Commitee*

MCCers, evangelicals differ in development work

HARRISONBURG, Va.—To borrow from the Chinese proverb, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers emphasize enabling people to fish rather than just giving them fish to eat, according to a Cornell University researcher.

Merrill Ewert, director of extension education at Cornell in Ithaca, N.Y., studied MCC workers and evangelical missionaries to examine concepts of development held by people in intercultural ministry. He presented some of his findings at a conference on Anabaptism and international development held Oct. 1-4 at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg. The conference drew 150 participants.

In comparison with approaches by evangelical workers, Ewert said, MCC workers have more commitment to community-based development (teaching people how to fish) and structural change (removing the net upstream to allow people to fish) and lean less on assistance-based methods (giving fish to hungry people.)

While many similarities also emerged between MCC workers and evangelicals, Ewert found that MCCers ranked multinational corporations and dependency higher as causes of poverty than evangelicals did. MCC workers also generally held more strongly to religious motivations for development work.—*Paul E. Groff*

Taking a chance on plastic

MEDA member has idea for Third World housing

WINNIPEG—When Fred Wall travels in the developing world, seeing the makeshift shacks that people call home plucks at two strings in his Mennonite, business heart. One, Wall would like to help. Two, he would like to involve his business, Winnipeg's Western Profiles, a supplier of PVC plastic components for windows.

As a result, Wall, a member of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), is taking a $12,000 (U.S.) chance that people in the Third World will buy a house made of plastic. He has built two of them in Jamaica, made entirely of recycled PVC.

Using nothing more than a screwdriver and saw, the two houses were put together by Western Profiles recycling manager Joe Froese and some potential local partners in a week and a half. One house is being used as an office at Kingston Mennonite Church. Froese says a crew could put one up in four or five days.

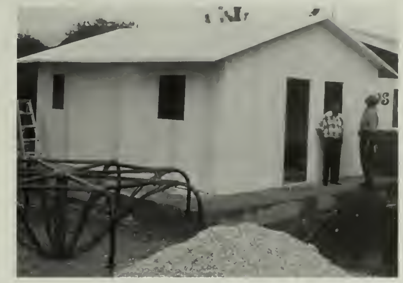
Wall had already developed a model of a small backyard shed of recycled plastic when Ron Braun, formerly head of MEDA's International Economic Development division, suggested he think about how the concept could be adapted to ease a serious housing shortage in the Third World.

The 16- by 20-foot prototypes are similar in size to many low-end Jamaican homes. They are made by assembling hollow tongue-and-groove PVC planks that are fastened with screws into a frame. Wall says the PVC is a weatherable, high-impact material that holds its finish and strength without maintenance, does not require paint or stain and never rots or warps. It is seen as an ideal material for tropical countries because it resists termites, rodents and ultraviolet degradation. The hollow plank offers the option of filling it with concrete for strength or styrofoam for insulation.

The houses are lightweight—about 4,000 pounds—and can be readily built in remote areas. When completed, they are easily transportable by a pickup and small trailer. The base cost, including shipping, will be in the neighborhood of $3,500 (U.S.). If they were made from virgin plastic the cost would be considerably higher.

The long-term objective is to establish joint ventures in developing countries with local contractors. Wall doesn't yet know what kind of retail markups those local partners will charge. "By our standards this kind of housing will be relatively cheap," he says. "But that may still be more than people can afford."

Jamaica is the first testing ground, with Nicaragua and Haiti also being considered. "We're dealing with two Jamaican businessmen who have been involved with other MEDA efforts there," Wall says. "They have said this thing might work.



MEDA photo by Joe Froese

Mennonite Economic Development Associates member Fred Wall hopes his plastic houses, such as this one in Jamaica, can help alleviate housing problems in the Third World. The houses are made entirely from recycled PVC.

"This is very, very different from anything they're used to. In many countries the very low-end housing is huts made of cardboard, wire and scraps of wood and covered with a tin roof. Their better housing is made of bricks or concrete blocks. Ours looks flimsy by comparison to concrete block."

When Wall visited Jamaica in February, one of the first things he was asked about the plastic was, "Will it stop an AK-47 bullet?"

"I told them, 'I don't think so; in fact I know it won't.' " he says. "They said, 'Well, security is a big issue here.' "

Then there are concerns about wind and, in Nicaragua, earthquakes. "In that regard we are confident; you can shake and roll our building but it won't collapse," Wall says. "Even if it did, it wouldn't kill anybody. That we can say without reservation."

Joe Froese, Wall's research and development technician, has high hopes for the plastic houses. He has lived in Africa and Latin America and believes people will live in them. "In my mind," he says, "there's no doubt about it."—*Wally Kroeker of MEDA News Service*

Radio program's music plays on

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Some of the a cappella hymns from nearly 30 years of *The Mennonite Hour* radio program have been released on two new compact discs. "Favorite Hymns" and "30 Men Sing" were created from original master tapes by Mennonite Board of Missions' Mennonite Media department.

The Mennonite Hour started in 1950, when four Eastern Mennonite University students asked for and received 15 minutes free air time a week from Harrisonburg radio station WSVA. The program aired weekly across the United States and Canada until it was discontinued in 1979.—*MBM News Service*

Belize Mennonites udderly thankful

Dairy cattle gift to Mexico done in gratitude to MCC

WINNIPEG— Thankful for the help provided by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) several decades ago, a Mennonite colony in Belize has passed on a similar gift to a Mexican Mennonite colony.

About 35 years ago, MCC donated some Holstein heifers to the Spanish Lookout settlement in Belize. The colony since then has prospered. MCC last year asked Spanish Lookout if it would sell some good dairy cows, well suited to the hot climate, to MCC for the new El Temporal colony in Campeche, Mexico. El Temporal was started last year when a group from the arid El Cuervo colony in northern Mexico moved to a more arable region in Campeche state on the Gulf of Mexico.

Rather than sell the cattle, Spanish Lookout decided to donate 10 cows and one bull. "This was a way of thanking MCC," says Dan Penner, an MCC volunteer in Mexico.

Not only did Spanish Lookout raise money from its members to buy good quality dairy cattle, it also collected the $3,500 needed for the paperwork and to transport the cattle.

The cattle arrived in El Temporal in May. Penner said when he last visited the colony in August, the new cows were doing well. Spanish Lookout has appointed a man from their colony, Ernie Thiessen, to check on the cattle every couple of months and to advise on feed, disease and management.

"It's always such a joy to see different colonies helping each other," Penner says. "The El Temporal Mennonites were very thankful for the help they were receiving from the Belizean Mennonites."—*MCC Canada News Service*

A history of histories for Virginia man

James O. Lehman didn't even like history, he once told *Mennonite Historical Bulletin.*

But at the urging of one of his professors, Lehman, then a student at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., did a paper on his home community, the Mennonite settlement at Sonnenberg-Kidron, Ohio.

In 1969, Lehman turned that paper into a book of several hundred pages. And he has continued researching and writing. Since that first book, he has done six more—all of them congregational histories. The most recent, recounting the 100 years of Lindale Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, rolled off the press this summer.

Lehman's other books have been on five Ohio Mennonite congregations: Pike of Elida, Crown Hill of Rittman, Oak Grove of Smithville, Longenecker of Winesburg and Salem of Kidron.

Lehman lives in Harrisonburg and is a retired EMU librarian and archivist.

Decade of growth among Chinese Protestants raises questions of quality as well as quantity

ELKHART, Ind.—The number of Protestants in China is estimated at 15 million to 20 million —75 percent of those becoming Christians in the past 10 years. While those numbers may seem large, it is only a drop in the country's sea of people, accounting for less than 2 percent of the population.

"In the United States people are thrilled with those numbers," says Todd Friesen. "But there the pastors say, 'We've got to stop thinking about numbers and think about quality.' The sermons stress the fundamentals of the faith because, for these people, it's their first time to hear the gospel."

Friesen and his wife, Dennette Alwine, have returned to the United States after seven years in China with China Educational Exchange, an umbrella organization of the Commission on Overseas Mission, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Board of Missions, MBMS International (Mennonite Brethren) and Mennonite Central Committee.

Because Christianity is a young faith, it remains prone to heresies and people falling away from the church, Friesen says. Only about 40 percent of the young people who join the church stay involved.

The growth also hasn't spread evenly. Most of the growth occurs in the countryside, often in isolated pockets. In his visits around China, Friesen found that while one village could be 80 percent Christian, the neighboring town might not have any Christians.

Still, many positive signs point to building a strong Christian faith in China. Even though Sunday schools are technically illegal (teaching children remains the government's job), many churches have them, although under a different name. Christians also have increased their social witness, such as through orphanages, nursing homes and disaster relief.

But deep, long-term growth comes slowly because of a lack of Christian background. "I never thought about how long it takes for someone to become a Christian," Friesen says. "But in a culture with no reservoir of understanding of Christianity, it takes a long time."

Alwine says some people are "cultural Christians, wanting to adopt the morals to improve society."

Friesen is now attending Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart. That decision came after meeting a 90-year-old Christian man.

"He had gone through difficult times during the Cultural Revolution," Friesen says. "But I saw his beautiful spirit, saw Christ in him, and I had a desire to come to the end of my life with that free spirit and joy. I felt a strong sense of call in that experience with him."—*Gary Kauffman for MBM and GCMC news services*

Internship was mutually beneficial for Tanzanian student and S.D. pastors

AKRON, Pa.—For Theophilus Odhiambo, his seven months in South Dakota were a time for personal and professional growth, a time for change. But the Mennonite pastors he worked with were also changed.

Odhiambo, a seminary student from Tanzania who returned to his home country in August, served with Freeman-area General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Brethren congregations as a pastoral intern during part of his year-long term with Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program. He served in every aspect of church work and congregational life: worship, committee meetings, visitation, outreach programs, catechism classes, Bible studies and congregational issues. He also wrote a biweekly meditation for the local weekly newspaper.

"I felt the glory of God working with my supervisors," Odhiambo says. "They worked hand in hand with me, asking me about my interests and what I would like to learn."

Odhiambo spent a little more than a month at each of seven congregations. The pastors say they found in him a friend and confidante and soon realized that they were learning as much as their intern.

"I learned through his wise insight," says Ken Peterson, pastor of Hutterthal Mennonite Church. "I was inspired by his faith and commitment to Christ and the church."

"He was not only there to learn but to teach," says Ana Zorrilla, MCC's Visitor Exchange Program director. "Theo did very well not only wanting to learn from the Freeman community, but [he] also wanted to challenge the pastors he worked with. He liked going from one church to another, experiencing different working styles and the different characters of each pastor."

Like most IVEP participants, Odhiambo served in two locations during his year in North America. After his time in Freeman, he worked as a pastoral intern with Reba Place, a Mennonite congregation in Chicago.

Back home, Odhiambo has resumed his religious studies, wanting to serve the Mennonite church in Tanzania. He had graduated from Tanzania's Mennonite Theological College before arriving in the United States.

"I consider myself blessed to have had the opportunity to work with Theo," says pastor Gordon Scoville of Salem Mennonite Church. "More than this, I am very hopeful for Theo's future work in the Mennonite church."

Says Odhiambo, "Whatever I learned this year in Freeman and Chicago will not be for myself, but it will be used to glorify the name of the Lord for the rest of my life."—*MCC News Service*

MCC photo by Glenn Gering

Theophilus Odhiambo (back) poses with some of the ministers he worked with during his International Visitor Exchange Program term in Freeman, S.D. (left to right): Ken Peterson, Hutterthal Mennonite Church; Gordon Scoville, Salem Mennonite Church; Bob Engbrecht, Salem-Zion Mennonite Church; George Klassen, Salem Mennonite Brethren Church; and Bob Hartzler, Northern District conference minister. Odhiambo also worked with Randy Tschetter of Bethany Mennonite Church, Ken Ontjes of Neu Hutterthal Mennonite Church and George Kaufman of Zion Mennonite Church. The latter two congregations are at nearby Bridgewater.

Noted conductor to lead benefit concert

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—One of the biggest names in choral music will be featured in a Nov. 15 concert to benefit a Mennonite-supported prison music ministry. Grammy Award-winning conductor Robert Shaw will direct a sing-along, including a 500-voice choir and orchestra, at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

Proceeds from the concert will go to Arts in Prison, a project initiated by Elvera Voth, a Bethel alumna and member of Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan. She is the founder and conductor of the East Hill Singers, a men's chorus comprised of inmates from the minimum-security Lansing Correctional Facility and Kansas City-area residents, including many Rainbow members. The East Hill Singers, founded in 1995, perform within the prison and hold at least two concerts a year outside the prison.

Under the Arts in Rainbow umbrella, Voth, a retired conductor and music professor, wants to also offer visual arts and dance for inmates at Lansing and elsewhere.

The Shaw-led concert will include works by Bach, Brahms, Handel, Mozart and others, plus several hymn arrangements. The 500-voice choir will feature singers from 11 choirs, including Bethel, Hesston (Kan.) College; Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan.; and Wichita (Kan.) Chamber Chorale.

Indiana church asks for and gets more

On the first Sunday of every month, worshipers at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., can give to two offerings: One is the regular collection, the other is for the 2 Percent Funds.

Assembly members are asked to give 2 percent of their income for projects above the congregation's budget. Half the funds go to local causes, such as helping pay someone's medical bills or repair someone's roof; the other half goes for global causes, such as buying wheelchairs in Nepal and helping cancer patients in Kenya.

Assembly has been raising 2 Percent Funds for about 20 years. The monthly offerings generate $18,000 to $20,000 a year.

Congo relief efforts under way

AKRON, Pa.—Three Mennonite agencies are giving to relief efforts to feed 10,000 residents of Kinshasa, Congo's capital, following a rebel uprising which produced dramatically higher food prices.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is contributing $25,000 to the feeding effort, which will benefit primarily Mennonites. Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and the Mennonite Brethren's MBMS International are adding an additional $25,000. Representatives from the three Congolese Mennonite conferences will distribute the food, which will be purchased locally.

MCC's workers in Congo, who left the country for South Africa in August due to the fighting, have returned to Kinshasa.—*MCC News Service*

Goshen College hosts peace conference

GOSHEN, Ind.—More than 60 people from four schools attended a peace conference for college students Oct. 23-25 on the Goshen College campus. Pax, Goshen's peace club, hosted the Student Peace Action Network (SPAN) conference for the region covering Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio.

Goshen students Danny Cruz, a freshman from Lancaster, Pa., and Vicky Solomon, a sophomore from Canal Fulton, Ohio, were elected to the SPAN national council.

In addition to Goshen, students attending the conference came from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Manchester (Ind.) College and Michigan State in Ann Arbor.

Bluffton receives grant for academic center

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton College has been awarded a $450,000 challenge grant for a new academic center from the Michigan-based Kresge Foundation. The school, currently conducting a capital campaign, must raise about $1.2 million by July 1, 1999, to receive the funds.

The $7.5-million, 44,000-square-foot academic center is expected to be ready for classes in September 2000. The facility will include classrooms, offices and media and computer centers.

Communication, culture theme for AMBS guest

ELKHART, Ind.—Drawing upon his 32 years as a communications professor at Goshen (Ind.) College, J. Daniel Hess addressed issues of faith, communication and culture as Theological Center Guest at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Oct. 5-9. Hess gave several presentations, including a showing of the film *Jesus of Montreal.*

AMBS each year invites a Theological Center Guest to spend a week on campus, sharing reflections on faith, life and work.

Credit unions gather for retreat

KIDRON, Ohio—About 35 people from six Mennonite credit unions in the United States and Canada met in Kidron Sept. 25-26 for the 12th annual retreat of the Association of Mennonite Credit Unions.

The Ohio Mennonite Federal Credit Union hosted the retreat, which was attended by board members, managers and staff from the six member organizations, located in Illinois, Manitoba, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Edgar Stoesz, former head of Mennonite Indemnity Inc. and author of *Doing Good Better,* was the weekend resource person. He shared from the book on being an effective board member of a nonprofit organization.

MDS holds leadership workshop

GAINESVILLE, Fla.—With the goal of learning how to manage a Mennonite Disaster Service project site, 24 people from Canada to Puerto Rico attended an MDS leadership workshop in Gainesville Sept. 29-Oct. 2. The workshop included sessions on how MDS is organized, how to start a project, teamwork, community interaction and mental health issues.—*MCC News Service*

The perfect Christmas gift

Children's videos from Mennonite Central Committee teach about conflict resolution, mending friendships and keeping trivial arguments from growing into bigger disputes.

In **Folktales of Peace** and **Folktales of Peace II,** storytellers bring to life tales from Africa, North America, Marshall Islands and Wales.

Beautifully illustrated, **African Tales** includes three African fables and a segment about a child in Zaire.

To order these videos, send your check for $25 Cdn./$20 U.S. per video to MCC at either address. Pennsylvania residents include 6% sales tax.

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Births

Beachey, Leah Grace, Oct. 3, to Cheryl (Miller) and Greg Beachey, Cassopolis, Mich.
Bergey, Shayna Janea, Oct. 4, to Gloria (Knechel) and Lowell Bergey, Hatfield, Pa.
Blevins, Timothy Caleb, Sept. 21, to Ben and Rebecca (Skrabak) Blevins, Parksburg, Pa.
Brandenberger, Andrew Luke, Oct. 13, to Elmer and Rhoda (Troyer) Brandenberger, LaGrange, Ind.
Breidigan, Megan Elise, Oct. 14, to Mary (Essick) and Steve Breidigan, Reading, Pa.
Chupp, Matthias Wolfgang, Aug. 28, to Lois (Meyer) and Ron Chupp, Goshen, Ind.
Cole, William Howard III, Oct. 5, to Bill and Marla (Lantz) Cole, Albuquerque, N.M.
Erb, Erica Sandra, Sept. 2, to Murray and Sandy Erb, Tavistock, Ont.
Hamsher, Ty Nathaniel, Oct. 5, to Bruce and Jocelyn (Dunn) Hamsher, Sugarcreek, Ohio.
Koshmider, Benjamin Kurt, Sept. 17, to Dennis and Sonia (Miller) Koshmider, Dundee, Ohio.
Krabill, Evan Paul, Oct. 18, to Kristina and Merrill Krabill, Newton, Kan.
Kuepfer, Mallory Margaret, Sept. 26, to Ezra and Michelle (Fuller) Kuepfer, Listowel, Ont.
Moore, Shailyn Marie, Sept. 29, to Chad and Jen (Carlson) Moore, Hatfield, Pa.
Stutzman, Brooke Marie, Aug. 28, to Julie (Kandel) and Mark Stutzman, Sugarcreek, Ohio.
Yavny, David, Sept. 12, to Valentina and Vasily Yavny, Harrisonburg, Va.

Marriages

Alderfer/Knudson: Ron Alderfer, South Bend, Ind., and Lori Knudson, South Bend, Oct. 2, by David and Janice Yordy Sutter.
Bender/Hostetler: Sheila Bender, Middlebury, Ind., and Vince Hostetler, Shipshewana, Ind., Oct. 3, by Linford Martin.
Courtney/Nafziger: Michael Ann Courtney, Reston, Va., and Jeremy Nafziger, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 10, by James Ott and David Owens.
Freed/Jesiolowski: Shawn Freed, Souderton, Pa., and Wendy Jesiolowski, Oley, Pa., Oct. 11, by Gerald Clemmer and David Greiser.
Galbreath/LeFevre: Patrice Galbreath, Sterling, Ill., and Ronald LeFevre, Sterling, Sept. 12, by Russ Coats.
Harris/Yoder: André Harris, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Naomi Yoder, Brooklyn, Aug. 8, by Monroe Yoder.
Hefti/Hofer: Brian Robert Hefti, Sioux Falls, S.D., and Kelly Sue Hofer, Sioux Falls, Oct. 10 at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Marshall, Minn.
Hess/Kraus: Rhoda Hess, Harrisonburg, Va., and Norman Kraus, Harrisonburg, Sept. 5, by Owen Burkholder and Phil Kniss.
Holmes/Steckly: Penny Holmes, Newton, Ont., and Scott Steckly, Milverton, Ont., Sept. 26 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Milverton.
Hunsberger/Torresani: Ron Hunsberger Jr., Lansdale, Pa., and Gabrielle Torresani, Newtown, Pa., Oct. 17, by Gerald Clemmer and David Greiser.
Hurst/Yelle: Michael Hurst, New Holland, Pa., and Amanda Yelle, New Holland, Oct. 10, by Urbane Peachey.
King/Leitzel: Kristina King, Aaronsburg, Pa., and Warren Leitzel, Woodward, Pa., Sept. 19, by David Miller.
King/Smith: Eric King, Woodstock, Ont., and Ann Smith, Woodstock, Sept. 19 at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, Ont.
Miller/Reinford: Gloria Denise Miller, Mifflinburg, Pa., and Carl Reinford, Middleburg, Pa., Oct. 10, by Sam Yoder and Ralph Reinford.
Miller/Stutzman: Anita Miller, Denver, and Steve Stutzman, Denver, Sept. 19, by Vernon Rempel.
Pfaltzgraff/Sawatzky: Rebecca Pfaltzgraff, Denver, and Alfred Sawatzky, Denver, Oct. 10, by Vernon Rempel.
Praul/Reimer: Craig Praul, State College, Pa., and Susan Reimer, Smithville, Ohio, Sept. 26, by David Miller.

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Salese/Wirth: Steve Salese, New Hamburg, Ont., and Karla Wirth, Tavistock, Ont., Oct. 3 at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock.
Shenk/Taylor: Jay Shenk, Newport News, Va., and Sharron Taylor, Newport News, Oct. 10, by Lloyd Weaver.

Deaths

Bachman, Edna Oyer, 100, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 12. Spouse: Joel Bachman (deceased). Parents: John and Mary Smith Oyer (deceased). Survivors: stepdaughter Verda Cubitt, 10 stepgrandchildren; 32 stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 16 at Ashley, Mich.
Chupp, Samuel, 85, Middlebury, Ind., died Sept. 21. Survivors: children Mary Edna Miller, Oleta Bontrager, Clarence, Richard; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 24 at Middlebury.
Eigsti, Mabel Heiser, 86, Morton, Ill., died Sept. 28. Spouse: Clayton Eigsti. Parents: Christian and Susan Wolber Heiser (deceased). Other survivor: one grandchild. Burial: Oct. 3 at Tremont, Ill.
Eshleman, Sara Zook, 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 10. Spouse: Merle Eshleman (deceased). Survivors: children David, Miriam Warner; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 15 at Harrisonburg.
Gillmore, Olive Fay Miller, 54, Anaheim, Calif., died Oct. 8 of cancer. Spouse: Jim Gillmore. Other survivors: children Mark, Kimberly, Krislyn, Regina; seven grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 17 at Anaheim.
Horst, Abram Sr., 87, New Holland, Pa., died Oct. 14. Spouse: Ruth Shultz Horst (deceased). Parents: William and Mary Sauder Horst (deceased). Survivors: children Joyce Kreider, Reba Umble, Clyde, Nelson; 18 grandchildren; 44 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at New Holland Mennonite Church.
Lederman, Lillian, 94, Archbold, Ohio, died Sept. 23. Spouse: Amos Lederman (deceased). Parents: Peter and Anna Richer Liechty (deceased). Survivors: children Cornell, Kathryn Kauffman, Loveda Liechty; 11 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 27 at Leo, Ind.
Lehman, Frieda, 84, Orrville, Ohio, died Oct. 8. Parents: Reuben and Anna Hofstetter Lehman (deceased). Burial: Oct. 10 at Kidron, Ohio.
Liechty, Randal, 37, Kidron, Ohio, died Oct. 7. Parents: Wayne and Joanna Kratzer Liechty. Other survivors: sister, Debi Hendrix, brothers, Craig and Ron. Burial: Oct. 10 at Kidron.
Martens, Sharon, 55, Buhler, Kan., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Loren Martens. Parents: William and Vera Schroeder. Other survivors: children Lance, Shannon Sneary, Suzette Martin; two grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 17 at Inman, Kan.
Miller, Perry, 85, Middlebury, Ind., died Sept. 21. Survivors: children Lloyd, Ida Mae Bontragaer, Ray, LeRoy; 16 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 25 at Middlebury.
Penner, David, 90, Inman, Kan., died Sept. 26. Survivors: children Walter, Alma Thiel; four grandchildren; two stepgrandchildren. Burial: Sept. 29 at Inman, Kan.
Regier, John, 85, Buhler, Kan., died Sept. 17. Survivors: children Karen Gehring, Karlene Pauls, Norma Regier, Betty Rich; nine grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 21 at Buhler by Bob Dalke.
Schmitt, John Vandenberg, 32, Toronto, died Sept. 6 from a bicycle-automobile accident. Wife: Monica Schmitt. Parents: Han and Martha Vandenberg. Memorial service: Sept. 10 at Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto.
Snider, Vera Weber, 94, Cambridge, Ont., died Oct. 2. Survivors: children Doris Blake, Grace Lennox, Willard, Cameron; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 5 at Kitchener, Ont., by Rudy Baergen.
Stuckey, Joseph, 83, West Unity, Ohio, died Sept. 28 of Parkinson's disease. Survivors: wife, Berneda; children Reta Detwiler, Wyman, Max, Tim; nine grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 30 at Stryker, Ohio, by Allen Rutter, Mark Miller and Wendy Miller.
Sutter, Harold, 85, Kouts, Ind., died Oct. 3. Survivors: children Patricia Bechtel, Don; four grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 7 at Kouts by John Murray, Chris Birky and Bill Beck.
Weaver, Algie, 91, Johnstown, Pa., died Sept. 13. Memorial service Oct. 10 at Johnstown by Harold and Mary Grace Shenk. Cremated.
Winters, Donald, 47, Hanover, Pa., died Sept. 13. Survivors: mother, Sarah Winters; brother, Dan. Burial: Oct. 4 at Hanover by Richard Lichty.
Wittrig, Wes, 74, Lebanon, Ore., died Aug. 24 of a heart attack. Survivors: wife, Shirley; children Vicki Williams, John, Jane Gerig, Ray, Roy; eight grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 27 at Albany, Ore., by Brent Kauffman and Marty Troyer.
Yoder, Dwight, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 12. Survivors: children Judith Denlinger, Barbara Stahly, John; six grandchildren. Memorial service Sept. 17 by Firman Gingerich and Lester Graybill.

classifieds

- **Johnstown Christian School** is seeking a ***high school principal*** (full-time) and a ***high school math teacher*** (part-time). For information, call Linda Gundlach at 814-288-2588.

- **Maplewood Mennonite Church** is seeking ***1/3-time music director*** with some worship planning responsibilities. Send resumes to Maplewood Mennonite Church, 4129 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815.

- **Mennonite Voluntary Service** is seeking a half-time ***administrator*** responsible for MVS unit administration and recruitment coordination. The person must have a vision for following the way of Jesus in service, strong communication skills and be open to travel. Please contact us at 316-283-5100; email mvs@gcmc.org.

- **Belmont Mennonite Church** seeks one half-time ***associate pastor***. Responsibilities include adult discipleship, pastoral care, children/youth ministries and some preaching. Applications should include Mennonite Ministerial Leadership Information form (MMLI).

  Please send application to Belmont Mennonite Church Search Committee, 925 Oxford St., Elkhart, IN 46516. For questions, contact Paul Gingrich, 219-295-7709; email Gingrich@juno.com. Applications will be considered beginning Nov. 20, 1998.

- **Souderton Mennonite Homes,** a growing continuing care retirement community, is seeking a ***full-time pastor*** and a ***part-time associate pastor.*** Key responsibilities will include the assessment and ongoing nurture of our residents' spiritual needs through visitation, leading groups and planning and leading worship services. The ability to team with other staff members and to develop linkages with home church pastors is vital.

  Interested individuals should fax resume with salary requirements to 215-723-9876, attn. Lisa Peirce; or mail resumes to Souderton Mennonite Homes, 207 W. Summit St., Souderton, PA 18964.

- **Spruce Lake Retreat** seeks ***executive director*** to provide leadership in camping ministries, vision and development. Appropriate education and experience required. Spruce Lake Retreat is a year-round facility of Franconia Mennonite Camping Association, located in northeastern Pennsylvania. Information about our facilities and program is available at www.sprucelake.org.

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by Rich Preheim

From the Discouraging Word Department

It is truly beautiful when those embattled, bitter and fractured folks known as Christians can for a few moments shelve their disagreements and exhibit Christ's love, compassion and fellowship in situations when they are most needed.

And then there are stories such as this one, courtesy of *The Lutheran,* the magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA):

At this summer's convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (another Lutheran denomination), South Dakota District president Raymond Hartwig had to apologize for giving a pastor permission to participate in an ecumenical worship service following the May tornado which virtually wiped the town of Spencer, S.D., off the map. Alas, Hartwig's decision ran counter to Missouri Synod policy preventing pastors from participating in worship with anyone not in "pulpit-and-altar fellowship" with the denomination. Hartwig said he gave permission "on the spur of the moment in a time of extreme trauma."

Missouri Synod delegates also called on those congregations also holding ELCA membership to resign from the ELCA or forfeit their Missouri Synod membership.

Prayer for the persecuted

An estimated 100,000 U.S. congregations are expected to participate in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) on Nov. 15. Last year's event drew 60,000 U.S. congregations plus participation from another 114 countries.

According to IDOP, roughly 200 million Christians face persecution—physical abuse, family separation, incarceration and martyrdom—and 350 million face discrimination and restriction as a result of their faith. The IDOP web site includes reports of imprisonments in Belarus and Laos, killings in Congo, government actions in Malaysia and Nigeria, torture in Sudan and more.

Prayer may be the least we can do to combat these powers and principalities. But then again, beseeching the omnipotent God may also be the most we can do.

Mixing religion and business

The customer is always right, the cliche goes. But how high do we elevate the customer?

In China, some Christians are opposing a phrase which has come into use to improve businesses' service: "The customer is God." The word used for God is the same used in Protestant worship services. And Amity News Service says it is wrong to compare the paying consumer with the One whose Son paid the ultimate price.

One pastor writes that Christians associate God with ultimate truth and perfection, attributes not found in a store. As a result, God's name offends the sensibilities of believers and debases the concept of God among the general population. The same pastor suggests a couple of alternate slogans: "Our goods are genuine, our prices honest—no deception!" and "Treat customers politely and serve with satisfaction."

Big bash for Brethren bonding

It's not the same size or scope as Mennonite World Conference, but some 130 of our Anabaptist kin met for the second Brethren World Assembly for four days this past July in Bridgewater, Va. The participants were six groups whose origins are in the German Baptist Brethren, which was formed in Germany in 1708. The largest and best known of these groups is the Church of the Brethren, one of the three historic peace churches (along with Mennonites and Quakers). The other groups include the Brethren Church, Grace Brethren, Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International and "old order" groups Old German Baptist Brethren and Dunkard Brethren.

The conference's speakers addressed the theme of "Faith and Family: Challenges and Commitments," reports *Messenger,* the Church of the Brethren periodical. There were also historical presentations and worship.

The first Brethren World Assembly was held in 1992 in Elizabethtown, Pa.

Media matters

A study of six weeks of broadcasts by five TV newsmagazines last fall shows less than 4 percent of their air time covered religion. According to *Brill's Content,* ABC's *20/20* led the way with 6.7 percent of their broadcast reporting on religion, followed by the CBS shows *60 Minutes* with 5.6 percent and *48 Hours* with 5 percent. *Dateline NBC* had 1.4 percent and ABC's *PrimeTIME Live* did not have any religion coverage.

The subjects receiving the most coverage by show were: *20/20,* health/medicine (26.7 percent); *48 Hours,* human interest (45 percent); *60 Minutes,* personality/profile (22 percent; *PrimeTIME Live,* human interest and crime (26.7 percent each); and *Dateline NBC,* personality/profile (19.2 percent).

Tidbits

- More than 1,000 indigenous people from 14 countries gathered for the second World Christian Gathering of Indigenous Peoples Sept. 5-13 in Rapid City, S.D. (*ChristianWeek*)
- Churches use about 7 percent more energy per square foot than the average home. (*Green Cross*)
- Eighty percent of all estates of more than $1 million leave nothing to charity. (*The Giving Project*)
- France has ruled that Jehovah's Witnesses is not a religion. (*Faith Today*)
- The number of U.S. students being schooled at home has doubled from 700,000 in 1992 to 1.4 million last year. (*Christianity Today*)

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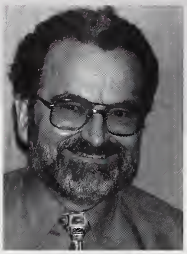

J. Lorne Peachey

Might the second be like the first?

We don't talk much about the second coming of Jesus these days. Not that we don't believe in it, but I suspect it's hard to drum up a lot of new things to say about Jesus' return and eternity when things are going so well for us here, particularly in North America. Could it also be we peace-loving, nonviolent Mennonites will be uncomfortable with the events we think might take place with the second coming?

A quick read of Revelation tells us what these could be: the sun black as sackcloth, the sky vanishing like a scroll being rolled up, hail and fire mixed with blood, locusts like horses equipped for battle, horses with lion heads breathing fire and smoke and sulfur, a red dragon with seven heads and ten horns that eats babies. All accompanying a horrific bloodbath as good fights evil, paling anything we have known from past wars here on earth.

Yet before we abandon ourselves to the horror of all this, we might take a lesson from Jesus' first coming. As Philip Yancey points out in *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Zondervan, 1995), first-century Jews also had figured out just how their Messiah would come: victorious, in power, a conqueror, one who would do away with evil and destroy the oppressor.

We who are Jesus' disciples are not marking time until the "real" phase of God's kingdom. Through humility, nonviolence, love and purity, we are living that kingdom now.

What they got instead was a baby; a 12-year-old who could argue theology; a young upstart who took off for the hills when situations got tense; a rabbi who looked out for the poor, the oppressed, the sinners; a teacher who talked about going the second mile, about loving the enemy, about love and humility. Because this Jesus was so different from the Messiah they expected, most missed him. The power structures crucified him.

Could the same thing happen again? Many Christians today have also figured out how Jesus will return. We expect some cataclysmic event, some horror, a great deal of violence—all necessary in order to usher in the full reign of God. True, some parts of the Bible support that view. But there's also another that emerges, particularly from Isaiah's depiction of the Suffering Servant: the One who doesn't open his mouth to condemn, the Savior who is crushed for our sins, the Lamb whose obedience makes us righteous before God.

The people of Jesus' day missed him because they didn't equate him with all this. Perhaps they had figured out that what Isaiah was talking about already applied to some other prophet of the past. We have figured out that these words describe Jesus of Nazareth. Could they also describe the Jesus of the second coming?

Even Revelation, with all its turmoil and gore, points in this direction. The one who ultimately triumphs is also a Lamb, a gentle, caring, loving, humble Lamb. With that Lamb come light and joy and worship.

What difference does this make? We who are disciples of the Lamb know that we are to live as Jesus lived. We are harbingers of God's kingdom on earth. In the words of Lois Barrett from her three-part series on the missional church in our past three issues: "The church in conformity with Christ is called to an alternative set of behaviors, an alternative ethic, an alternative kind of relationship." Being alternative is characterized by nonviolence, going the second mile, bringing economic justice and maintaining right relationships.

But I sometimes wonder if we are alternative only halfheartedly because we really don't expect it to work. While we are to be a sign of God's kingdom, for that kingdom to take over fully we expect there must be a bloody and violent war between good and evil.

The Bible does promise that death and evil will be defeated. It does not tell us how. Might it be through love, through suffering, through forgiving sins rather than banishing sinners? In other words, might the second Savior be just like the first?

If that be the case, we who are his disciples are not marking time until the "real" phase of God's kingdom. We are living that kingdom now. Our life of humility, nonviolence, love and purity will not only point the way to Jesus today. It will also help others to recognize him when he comes again.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

November 10, 1998

Sisay Desalegn grew up in Ethiopia when religion was outlawed. One day, when he was leading a Bible study, officials took him away, interrogated him for six hours, then took him to prison and told him that unless he renounced his faith, he would not leave alive. Years later, he is bringing the good news to East Africans in Seattle, supported by Seattle Mennonite Church. How did he make such a journey? See his story on page 4.

8 Transformations: a new TM series
10 Hurricane Mitch prompts relief efforts
11 Mennonites, Catholics hold first talks
20 The difference the Bible makes

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Judgment and judges

During the past months, letters of countless men and women of faith have contained strong statements about their understanding of Scripture in reference to sexuality. Like interpreting an optical illusion, some see one image very clearly but fail to see a very different image that is equally clear to the next person. Yet both are attempting to be faithful followers of Jesus.

Trying to ponder both the mercy and anger of God through my finite mind gets me into a tangle of paradoxes. It is akin to a rope on a pulley. Pulling on one end retracts the other. Scripture has repeated examples of the rope being pulled far to one end or the other. Yet it never disconnects. Oh yes, like the four blind men describing an elephant, isolated cases can be found that seem to show the force on only the one end of the rope. Jeremiah 15 makes a strong case for the rope seeming to have only one end. Yet chapter 31 of the same book indicates the end of the rope represents mercy and extends to infinity.

When dealing with polarizing issues such as those we grapple with these days, we do well not to gang up on either end of the rope. To do so may find us opposing the very God who created the paradoxical rope. Are we humble enough to let judgment rest with the God who created us mortal rather than judge?—*Charles B. Longenecker, New Holland, Pa.*

To all the good people in all parts of the world, I say enough! There is too much contention among our church people. What profit is made when we put one another down? What makes any of us a rightful judge to condemn another, no matter what their sexual being? We can quote Romans 1 and 1 Corinthians 5, or we can also quote 1 Corinthians 13, Colossians 3:12-15 and Philippians 4:8.

The Bible speaks very clearly of sin and forgiveness. It seems to me that all the bashing and preaching are of no value. It is God who is the judge and will judge every one of us in due time. Why don't we spend more time praying for one another, helping each other, giving to those in need and supporting our leaders in the church?—*Dan Baumgartner, Versailles, Mo.*

I'm truly grieved over what I see happening to our beloved denomination over the grossly misunderstood issue of same-sex orientation. The minister who conducted the funeral service for Matthew Shepard, the gentle young man who was brutally murdered in a hate crime near Laramie, Wyo., said Shepard exuded the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. I suspect if most of us closely examined our family trees, we would discover this aspect. Read the wrenching story of Helen Hochstetler in *A Time to Love*. Many of these are the gentlest people on earth, or else why would they want to continue to be among us? Yet these are the people we want to exclude from our fellowships. May God have mercy.—*Samuel J. Troyer, Chambersburg, Pa.*

A safe place

Thank you, Goshen (Ind.) College president Shirley Showalter, your administrative staff and campus pastor Sylvia Shirk Charles for the positive steps you have taken in response to the vulgar messages that appeared on the campus sidewalks ("Goshen College Strives to Mend Relationships Following Homosexuality Controversy," Oct. 20). Thank you for repeating your pledge to assure that Goshen College will be, as far as possible, a safe place for each student irrespective of race, color, creed or sexual orientation. I urge the Goshen board of overseers and Mennonite Board of Education to openly support efforts to provide this safe place.

I am deeply concerned about teachings and position statements in the Mennonite Church that foster continuing prejudices and stereotypes. I confess my own complicity in perpetrating attitudes contributing to homophobia for many years, first due to ignorance and lack of concern, then because of my perceptions of what it meant to be loyal to the church as well as because of shame and fear. I repent and ask forgiveness from my gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender sisters and brothers; from our son, who nine years ago shared with us his awareness that he is gay; and from the churh. —*Ruth Conrad Liechty, Goshen, Ind.*

On MOTH's wings

Have we forgotten about the Holy Spirit? Several weeks ago, National Public Radio reported on the origin and rapid marketing success of the abbreviation WWJD (What Would Jesus Do). This seems to resonate with many folks, even though I consider that Jesus played out his role as the messenger of God and that God left us with the Holy Spirit. The same NPR segment reported that the WWJD marketing folks were preparing to introduce FROG (Fully Reliant on God) in a wide variety of forms. I submit that a more appropriate symbol might be MOTHS (More of the Holy Spirit) in our

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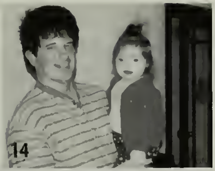
Vol. 1, No. 36, November 10, 1998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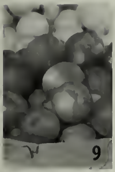
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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998—by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

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readers say

lives. The moving and sustaining of humankind by the Holy Spirit might be a truly revealing means of crossing over the huge gaps in this violent world of competing cultures and narrowmindedness even as MOTHS move silently over the neighborhoods and countries on gossamer wings.—*Wes Hare, Richmond, Va.*

Success stories

Never have I seen in print the statement that "The rich are getting richer but the poor are getting richer far faster." It will never replace the classic "The rich are getting richer [and] the poor are getting poorer" used in Eugenio Hess's letter (Readers Say, Oct. 20).

But the first statement tells more of the truth about the world's poor today. Recent statistics show that China has increased output at an annual rate of 9.8 percent for 20 years. This is better than any rich nation in the West ever did. China's income has increased 800 percent. India has moved toward the market later and less boldly, but its success, while less, is still considerable. When we talk about the poor of the world and deny the success story of these 2.1 billion people, we are off track. And it is not just their story. Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and others are part of it.

The church needs to follow China's four steps. In the 1970s, the Chinese (1) looked again at the problem of poverty, (2) found examples of success, (3) studied success and (4) applied new understandings. I am sure that failure to follow these four steps has caused tens of millions of deaths and grinding poverty for billions for generations. If the Chinese are right, we must follow them. I agree with Eugenio Hess that we need to act against the terrible oppression of poverty which holds so many in bondage.—*Allen Stoltzfus, Harrisonburg, Va.*

**Cover photo
supplied by Sisay Desalegn**

Sisay Desalegn heard God call him to spread the good news, but he didn't imagine doing it in Seattle.

From prison in Ethiopia

by Janet Berg

No one remembers when the quiet, young, neatly dressed foreigner first came to Seattle Mennonite Church. It was likely in early 1996. He was probably greeted at the door by the regular greeters, and during the introduction of visitors he probably introduced himself as Sisay Desalegn from Ethiopia, but no one remembers.

Now, two years later, Sisay is being supported by the church and the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference as a full-time minister to East Africans in Seattle. The coming together of an urban peace church and this "foreign missionary" can only be seen as God's work, for the beginnings of the two calls to mission were worlds apart.

Sisay Desalegn (pronounced See-sigh Des-a-leen) was born and raised in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. His father worked for the American embassy, and his parents were members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, an ancient Christian church established in the fourth century. Sisay was a high school student in 1974, when the communist military government took over Ethiopia. He was abruptly taken out of school and away from his home to a rural work camp for two years. Evenings at the camp were spent in mandatory reading and discussion of Marxist books. At first Sisay went along with the teachings, even those that opposed the Bible by claiming it was written by rich people to keep the poor from revolting.

Although raised in a Christian home, Sisay considered himself an atheist. In 1978, a Christian in camp gave him a Bible, and he read it for himself for the first time in his life. "I made a 180-degree turnaround," says Sisay. He continued to read the Bible many times, despite pressure from other students, who accused him of following the religion of American imperialists or working for the CIA.

Sisay became a student activist after his release from work camp; he was active in leading Bible studies and training other students to lead. It was a dangerous time to be a student because the revolution against the government was started by students (see box), and the new military government spied on student meetings to crush any suspected revolutionary activity. Students caught in such meetings were sometimes shot on sight and their corpses left in the streets the next morning to deter others. Many a Bible study was interrupted by a knock on the door; then the police would take away someone, and they were never seen alive again.

One day in 1979, when Sisay was leading a Bible study, the armed district cadres took him away and interrogated him for six hours. Who was he working for? the revolution? the United States? They asked him about his belief in God, tried to persuade him that God did not exist. Sisay says, "The Spirit of God gave me [words] to speak. I said I belonged to God and that just as a watch has a maker, we have a maker." The cadres took him to prison and told him that unless he renounced his faith he would not leave alive.

During the next three months he was beaten until he was nearly unconscious. When he did not renounce his faith, they finally agreed to release him on a promise that he not preach or meet again with Christians. Exhausted, he signed the paper.

Sisay says, "The physical wounds from the beating took about a month to heal, but the emotional wounds took more than a year. I was tormented with guilt at having agreed to leave the church." Christian friends reassured him that even Peter, who denied Christ three times, was given another chance.

From 1978 to 1982, Seattle Mennonite Church (SMC) grew as more Mennonite Voluntary Service workers joined the church. They were active in peace and social concerns, living out their faith in their everyday lives. Some were arrested in demonstrations against government injustices to the poor.

When he recovered, Sisay became active in the Meserete Kristos (Ethiopian Mennonite) Church, founded in 1951. On Sunday, Jan. 24, 1982, the government declared the Meserete Kristos Church congregation in Addis Ababa a deterrent to the Marxist revolution; armed guards boarded up the church building, and the 1,500 people who had attended worship that day were forbidden to meet. Sisay became part of the underground cell church movement, teaching and leading Bible studies in homes.

The revolution in Ethiopia occurred in 1974, when Mengistu led a coup to overthrow Haile Selassie. Mengistu then formed a military government that was opposed by a guerrilla movement formed in part by students. From 1976 to 1978 Mengistu's government tried to root out the rebels; he finally secured assistance from Cuba and the Soviet Union and set up a communist government.
—Janet Berg

ministry in Seattle

During that time Sisay met Yodit Mekuna, another university student who had also been imprisoned for her evangelistic beliefs. They married in 1987. Also during this time he completed his university training as a registered pharmacist and took a government job, but his real passion was spiritual ministry. Wherever he traveled he got involved in the local schools, starting and assisting Bible studies.

SMC moved twice in three years (the first in 1983), both moves necessitated by growth. Voluntary service workers stayed after their terms; some married, bought homes and started families. They invited friends and acquaintances, many of whom were also starting families.

In answer to prayers, the communist government was overthrown in 1991, and the Meserete Kristos Church was free to worship openly. Its numbers had grown tenfold. Sisay cut back on his pharmacy practice and devoted more time to spiritual ministry. He received some financial support from his church.

> **Sisay continued to read the Bible many times, despite pressure from other students, who accused him of following the religion of American imperialists or working for the CIA.**

Just when it seemed that Sisay's life course was set, everything changed. Yodit had a stroke caused by an unrecognized heart condition, lapsing into a coma that lasted two months. Her waking was miraculous, clearly influenced by intense prayers of their church; but it was obvious she needed more specialized medical treatment than was available in Ethiopia. Their children, Brukab and Eliab, were 4 and 5 in 1993, when the family moved to London, where they stayed for the next three years. Medical tests revealed a heart condition requiring surgery and blood thinners to prevent further strokes.

While Yodit underwent intense physical and speech therapy, Sisay prayed for direction. The state of church life in London shocked him. "In Ethiopia the churches could not hold all the people; in London churches were empty and were being sold and turned into mosques," says Sisay. He enrolled at London Bible College and obtained a master's degree in theology. The family attended the Mennonite fellowship in London. Sisay remained convinced he had a mission: to share the good news of a personal relationship with Christ.

SMC's growth continued, and with it more organized worship and education. New attenders from non-Mennonite backgrounds outnumbered ethnic Mennonite attenders. In 1990, the group looked for space for a church. Three years later members moved into their new meeting place—a renovated neighborhood movie theater. That same year a new sister church, Evergreen Mennonite Church, began meeting on the east side of Seattle.

In late 1995, a call came from the United States. An Ethiopian fellowship group in Boston needed a minister. Sisay felt this to be God's leading and went without delay, even though it meant leaving Yodit and their sons in London until he got established. But the group could not come to an agreement to support him. He decided to travel to Seattle.

Seattle was home to many immigrants from Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, all of them eager to meet someone from their region and open to hearing about Christ. Sisay found room and board in exchange for help around the house and began his ministry. He visited the sick, made prison visits, translated for medical appointments and did marital and family counseling. He translated the Christmas story into Amharic (the Ethiopian native language) and gave it to people he contacted. Always he listened to people and gave them words of comfort from the Bible; he told them what God had done in his life.

SMC in its new location grappled with purpose and direction. The permanent space afforded opportunities never before available, and a donor gave the church a large contribution. At weekend church retreats in 1995, members said that they wanted more spirituality and outreach.

After several months of living in Seattle, Sisay felt a growing conviction that this was

Sisay (above) remained convinced he had a mission: to share the good news of a personal relationship with Christ.

Sisay continues to visit the sick and imprisoned, counsels people with marital or family problems, takes people to their medical appointments and translates for them. Always he listens to their stories.

Sisay comes with a mission, not a cause, a mission that claims the power of God rather than using the power of guilt. The decision to support his east African ministry was based not on sympathy for sufferers but on an affirmation of God's work, already in progress.

where God wanted him, so he made one more attempt to obtain support for his ministry. He paid a visit to Seattle Mennonite Church in 1996. The pastor, Weldon Nisly, says he knew intuitively from their first meeting that here was a man with a call from God. Other SMC members met with Weldon to hear Sisay and consider how the church might be involved.

At the congregational meeting in November 1996, the leadership council presented the proposal that SMC begin support of Sisay by bringing his family to Seattle; there were no dissenting votes. Sisay and Yodit, Eliab and Brukab were reunited in time for Christmas.

Decisions assuring more permanent assistance rapidly followed. Several interested members formed a support group that meets regularly with Sisay. This group also met with Weldon and with John Miller, representative of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, to work on an ongoing support agreement.

SMC's embodiment of missions is unfolding, but Sisay's coming has marked a beginning. He brings together SMC's emphasis on peace and justice and his experience with evangelism. He models a new form of nonviolence: choosing not to use his past suffering to support his cause by inflicting guilt on his hearers. Sisay comes with a mission, not a cause, a mission that claims the power of God rather than using the power of guilt. SMC's decision to support his east African ministry was based not on sympathy for sufferers but on an affirmation of God's work, already in progress.

One of the most tirelessly enthusiastic SMC members during this process was Chak Ng. He was on the leadership council at the time of the decision and has become the first congregational missions coordinator, a new position created by the council in the past year. Chak says, "I think we are ready to move out of our self-absorption and think beyond our cultural walls. We may be coming of age as a church and are prepared to see missions as the next phase of our growth."

Sisay envisions a counseling center, a discipleship and training center for African Christians, an East African Mennonite congregation and short-term mission exchange programs between Addis Ababa and Seattle.

His work has already had national and international impact. He recently translated a book on Bible doctrine into the Amharic language; it has been circulated in Ethiopia and among Amharic-speaking people around the globe. He has been invited to small Ethiopian congregations throughout the United States and Canada to advise and train leaders. He helped organize the Friends of Meserete Kristos church conference in Goshen, Ind., in June (see the July 14*The Mennonite*).

Reunited for Christmas1996: Sisay and Yodit Desalegn with their sons, Eliab and Brukab

But Sisay prefers working with individuals. He continues to visit the sick and imprisoned, counsels people with marital or family problems, takes people to their medical appointments and translates for them. Always he listens to their stories. And he invites them to SMC or to one of the other evangelical Ethiopian fellowships in Seattle.

SMC has ongoing discussions about how to nurture spirituality and outreach. Growth continues by word of mouth, newcomers finding the church in the phone book and people inviting friends and neighbors.

Early this year a new Ethiopian family began attending SMC. No one noticed when they became regulars, but their names are in the new church directory: Toto Adefris and Elleni Negash and their children, Minkik and Ankober. When asked how they had met Sisay, Toto said, "We met Sisay here at Seattle Mennonite Church."

Janet Berg is a member of Seattle Mennonite Church.

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In God's hands

by Elaine Maust

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hands.—Psalm 31:14-15a NIV

It had been a tough day. I had a life decision to make, and I was afraid to make it. That monster "What if" kept growling at me from around the corners of the future. I pulled back, reluctant to commit myself. If that weren't enough, I was waiting for medical test results, which eventually proved there was nothing wrong. But that day my imagination whispered ominous suggestions.

Picking blackberries, a favorite childhood task, beckoned as a way to be alone to think and pray. Grabbing an old ice cream bucket, I headed for the briers.

In the blackberry patch the thorns pricked at my fingers the way decisions and worries had pricked at my heart all day. I remembered the text for the sermon I preached the day before, Matthew 6:34 (NIV): "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." I imagined Jesus saying, "Don't you have just about all the problems you can deal with today without borrowing a little trouble from tomorrow?" I saw him smiling at me and heard him calling me by the nickname he so often called the disciples, Little Faith.

It was out there under the blazing, Mississippi summertime sun that I realized fear is a poor basis for any decision regarding God or the church.

I remembered 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I told God, "If your power is made perfect in weakness, then I'm fixin' to make you look really good here." It was out there under the blazing, Mississippi summertime sun that I realized fear is a poor basis for any decision regarding God or the church.

Rescue ship: That night as I lay in bed in that marshmallow state between sleep and wakefulness, I imagined myself, like a shipwreck survivor clinging to the rope hoisting her out of the storm and onto the rescue ship, hanging on to God. "Oh God," I prayed as I slipped into sleep, "You are the One I'm hanging on to. Whatever would I do without you?"

The next morning, I got out my journal and Bible. Remembering the prayer image of the night before, I revisited the woman hanging on to God. I looked at the picture again and realized there was more. Stepping back, I saw that as I crouched, clinging to the rope, there was something beneath me.

I walked over to myself and put my arm around my shoulders. I looked into my tense, worried face, drawn as tightly as my hands around the rope. "It's OK," I said, "You can let go. God is holding you."

Tentatively I let go of the rope with one hand. I did not slip. I reached down. There was something below me. Slowly I let go with both hands and found myself kneeling in the cupped hand of God. I drew a huge breath and let the relief spill over me. God was holding me. I didn't need to hang on so desperately. Braver, I leaned back. And in a moment of joyful faith and abandon, I put my hands behind my head and lay back, grinning and free. In moments I was changed from a shipwreck victim to a woman as carefree as Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn on their raft.

Later in the day, I went to my quiet place, a solitary bench overlooking Bonita Lake. There

"The Bible is the essential book of the church," says the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. "We commit ourselves to persist and delight in reading, studying and meditating on the Scriptures."

Then what happens? We decided to find out by writing to various people throughout the global Mennonite world and asking: What Scriptures have you been reading lately that have made a difference to you? What changes have you made in your life in the last two years because of your involvement with God's Word?

The replies we've received will be printed in a series of articles we're calling Transformations. The series will appear approximately every other week in *The Mennonite* for the next several months.—*Editors*

I tried the posture for real. Hands behind my head, I leaned back onto the bench. I wriggled my fingers, free and open. I rested. I prayed.

"What is it, Lord?" I asked.

Picking up the Bible I had brought along, I flipped open to Isaiah, a book of the Bible God had used to bring me comfort and direction in the past. There I bumped right into, like a forgotten old friend at the mall, Isaiah 49. "Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the Lord called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me" (Isaiah 49:1-2a, NIV). Tears welled up in my eyes.

I ran my hand across the smooth page, rounding the curved edge into my palm and caressing the leather cover with a squeeze.

Personal word: I do not understand how the Bible speaks to people. I do not understand how God can use words written so long ago to speak a message at just the right time in just the right way. I do not know how that message can feel so profoundly like a personal word from God.

But I know a pool of grace when I'm sitting in the middle of it and when it is poured over my head like a waterfall. And at that moment, with my Bible in my hands, I knew grace. "You are too good to me, God," I said loud enough for God and a few pine trees to hear. "You know that, don't you?"

During the walk back to the car from the bench at the lake, I allowed myself to enjoy the peace that had begun to settle into my heart during the past 24 hours. Often since that time I have revisited the image of the storm and the rescue and the rope and the hand. When I begin to feel the panic or worry squeezing at my insides, I remember the peace that God gave me then. I know that if that peace was possible for that experience, there will be peace for any new circumstance. For I am moving through life, in God's hands.

Elaine Maust is co-pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss.

Okanagan winter apples

by Leonard Neufeldt

Even the moon is spotted this morning,
and rust-red ends of the year stippled
with desert fruit hardened by cancerous growth.
The wind that shook our bed last night stripped
away leaves, leaving apples everywhere,
nodules pressed against the white-peeled
sky … ellipses. No words needed
to remember your manubrial scar line

or summer. All morning we bring apples
in. Boxes redden, our hand-painted bowl
brims as the air ripens and drops a stem-leaf
blossomlike to the floor. You open the door
to a tree picked clean of detail,
motionless, boughs empty with praise.

Leonard Neufeldt lives in West Lafayette, Ind.

MCC readies for post-hurricane response

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is joining with Mennonites in Honduras and Nicaragua and other partners to respond to the devastation left by Hurricane Mitch, which is being described as the worst natural catastrophe to hit Central America.

MCC is expecting to receive aid requests for as much as $300,000. Financial contributions are welcome, and a material resources drive is in the planning stages.

The results of Mitch's fury in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have been widespread and severe. Seven thousand people are estimated to have died in the region. In Nicaragua, one mudslide alone killed more than 1,000 people. More than 100,000 people around San Pedro Sula, Honduras, were driven from their homes by flooding, while another 20,000 people were displaced in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital. Water reached the third floor of some buildings in downtown Tegucigalpa. Some 29,000 Salvadorans were left homeless by the storm.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank, of which MCC Canada is a member agency, will likely be asked to provide a third of MCC's response, which will allow for local purchases of corn and beans. MCC also has about 10 tons of canned meat to be shipped to Honduras.

MCC has already provided $10,000 to the MAMA Project, a partner in San Pedro Sula, where flooding is a chronic problem. Another $40,000 is being provided to the Mennonite Social Action Commission, affiliated with the Honduran Mennonite Church. Additional requests are expected.

"Infrastructure damage is huge with nearly every major highway in Honduras severed by destroyed and damaged bridges," says Ed Stamm Miller, who directs MCC Honduras programs with his wife, Sue.

In Nicaragua, MCC will work with the Anabaptist Emergency Committee, a joint effort of the three Anabaptist conferences in the country. MCC has not yet received a specific request, but one is expected. MCC is also anticipating requests for assistance from Guatemala.

In El Salvador, MCC expects to respond to a request for $5,000 to $10,000 to assist with relief efforts in the country's coastal region.

Amor Viviente, a Mennonite conference born in Honduras but now with congregations in the United States, is also launching a relief response in Honduras.—*by John M. Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

Couple honored for 30 years 'at sea'

For 30 years, Harold and Twila Buckwalter have been ministering to people from all over the globe—all without leaving Virginia.

The Buckwalters were recently honored by their congregation, Mennonite-affiliated Cornerstone Church and Missions, based in Harrisonburg, Va., for three decades of service with Church at Sea, an evangelistic ministry to seafarers in the port of Hampton Roads.

"We at Cornerstone support Harold and Twila because we believe in them and in what they are doing," says Sam Scaggs, Cornerstone's missions pastor.

Church at Sea's ministries include witnessing to unbelieving crew members, pastoral care to Christian sailors, advocacy for seafarers' rights and meeting practical needs, such as groceries and clothing.

Striving for the goal

Jonathan Stoltzfus

Bluffton (Ohio) College player Katie Kanter (left) chases the ball and Goshen (Ind.) College's Elizabeth Briggs in a game won by Bluffton 2-1 in overtime. Goshen on Oct. 24-26 hosted the men's and women's soccer teams from Bluffton and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. In other women's scores, Bethel defeated Goshen 3-1 and Bluffton 4-1. In men's games, Goshen defeated Bethel 4-1 and Bluffton 7-0, and Bethel defeated Bluffton 6-1.

AMBS window

Associated
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Focus

The missional nature of the church

Art McPhee

The New Testament describes Christians as light, salt, good seed, and ambassadors. These suggest we are by nature revealers of the gospel, not just performers of a duty. The implication is that those who know Jesus and are filled by the Holy Spirit can't keep from proclaiming the good news. The fact that Jesus and the apostles never dwelled on the subject confirms it: evangelization is not so much an obligation as an impulse.

As Jeremiah put it, "If I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,' his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot." Paul said much the same thing when he asserted, "Christ's love compels us."

The pervasiveness of this impulse in the early church is striking. Whenever people met up with Jesus, they had to tell somebody. The Gadarene from the tombs seems to have told everybody he met about his encounter with Jesus, for when Jesus arrived in the Decapolis, he was greeted by thousands. The woman from Sychar was in such a hurry to get back to town with her report about "this man who told me everything I ever did" that she forgot her water jar.

Frequently, Jesus asked people not to say anything, but Luke says that "the news spread all the more." After Pentecost, when the authorities forbade speaking about Jesus, Peter and John threw up their hands and exclaimed, "But we must!" Had the Great Commission never been uttered, we deduce that the gospel would still have been preached.

A missionary God requires a missionary church. And that is what the early church was—a church engaged in "turning the world upside down."

Consider this: why were the gospels written? Wasn't it because the church was in mission and the multitude of new disciples, who were the fruit of its evangelization, needed to know the story the apostles had known firsthand? Why were the epistles written? Wasn't it because, throughout the Mediterranean world, fledgling congregations—offspring of the church's witness—needed instruction and encouragement? Why was there a need for a Jerusalem Council and the theological innovations that flowed from it? Was it not because new issues were arising as the result of the church's outreach to Gentiles? Thus, theology was not the mother of mission; mission was the mother of theology!

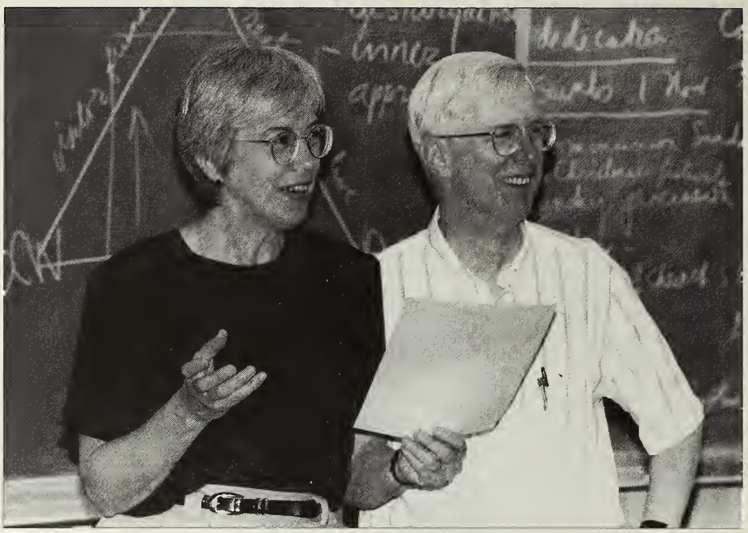
The first century church's participation in God's mission, as well as the Anabaptists' faithfulness to its example is, in part, what lies behind AMBS's new Master of Divinity concentration and new Master of Arts degree in mission and evangelization. In the light of what we read in the New Testament, there is just no getting around the continuing validity of God's people in mission. Moreover, the preoccupation of the early church with preaching makes it clear that evangelization is not a peripheral or parenthetical activity, **but the main thing the church does.** To speak of the church and its mission is not adequate therefore; one must speak, instead, of the missionary nature of the church. In the words of Emil Brunner: "the church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." Or, as Peter solemnly reminds us, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God." For what purpose? ". . . that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Art McPhee is assistant professor of mission and evangelism at AMBS. He joined the faculty in 1997.

Inside

AMBS offers new degrees in mission and evangelism

Teaching mission and evangelism: Interdisciplinary and Multicultural



Eleanor Kreider and Alan Kreider, long-time workers in London, England, with Mennonite Board of Missions, taught the course Worship and Mission during the annual summer Mission and Evangelism Institute. The course explored how both mission and worship are integral to church life. As one member of the class said, "You can't do local worship without global mission and vice versa."

Eleanor and Alan are adjunct members of the AMBS faculty, Eleanor in the areas of worship and mission; Alan in church history and evangelism.

New programs of study in mission and evangelism

Beginning this fall, AMBS offers two new programs of study in mission and evangelism.

The Master of Divinity program, designed to prepare people for pastoral ministry, offers a **new concentration in mission and evangelism.** This 90-credit-hour program is for people who want to lead congregations with a vision for outreach or who want to energize congregations for ministry to their communities.

The **Master of Arts: Mission and Evangelism** is a new program of 60 credit hours. It is for people who want to prepare for mission or development work in another part of the world, who want to be involved in mission administration, or who want to serve in an outreach ministry for a congregation with a larger staff.

Faculty members with specific assignments in teaching mission and evangelism:

Art McPhee, assistant professor in mission and evangelism
Walter W. Sawatsky, associate professor of church history and mission, director of Mission Training Center
Alan Kreider, adjunct faculty in church history and evangelism
Eleanor Kreider, adjunct faculty in worship and mission
Wilbert Shenk, adjunct faculty in mission

For more information about these programs, contact the AMBS admissions office, 219 296-6268 or admissions@ambs.edu.

Studying mission and the Bible

Taking a course on Luke and Acts in two weeks gives you a good excuse to cancel everything else on your schedule during that time. Not that I did that, but it sure would have been a good excuse! It's also a good way to consider in-depth just what the good news of the gospel was in Jesus' day, and what the good news is in our contemporary world.

In Luke, Jesus presents the good news in a variety of settings and in a variety of ways. In Acts, Jesus commissions his disciples to carry on the tradition of sharing the gospel in culturally appropriate ways to an ever-widening variety of people. The direction of the Holy Spirit throughout Luke-Acts underscores the ongoing necessity of divine guidance in sharing the good news.

As an employee of our denominational mission agency I was encouraged that our efforts to preface and surround our work with prayers is sound methodology, as well as our ongoing efforts to proclaim the gospel with integrity and in culturally appropriate ways.

As a class we discovered the good news in our own lives and began to articulate more clearly for ourselves just what the good news is. It was enriching to discover that we have good news to share—news that makes a difference in our world.

- Roma Miller is an AMBS student who took the course, Luke-Acts: Biblical Perspectives taught by Mary H. Schertz during the summer AMBS Mission and Evangelism Institute.

Teaching mission and evangelism:

Interdisciplinary and Multicultural

Mission and evangelism studies at AMBS take an interdisciplinary approach. Courses **draw from the well of Scripture,** as in a summer study of Luke-Acts or Gospel of John; **receive nourishment from the historical and theological perspectives,** such as in a study of Christian History in Global Perspective or Contemporary Theologies of Mission; and **become life for the world in a variety of experiential and mission-praxis courses,** such as Communicating the Gospel, and Christian Encounter with World Faiths. A sociological perspective, in the study of Church and Society, further strengthens the program of study; Christian Renewal Movements introduces the ecumenical dialogue that is crucial in mission today.

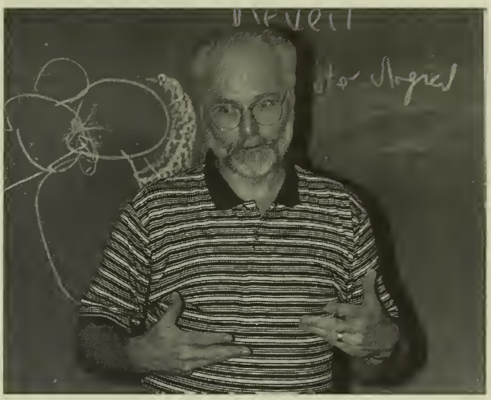
Our approach to mission and evangelism is and should be both energetic and humble. We do have good news to share with our world of false gods and misdirected goals. In sharing this gospel we know also how important it is to learn from the past, anchor our commitment in Scripture, and respect the experiences of diverse peoples today. Art McPhee's course, Anthropology and Sociology for Christian Witness lays a basic foundation in this respect. In addition to numerous classroom courses, the experiential component built into numerous offerings, such as the study tour in Asia next summer, Global Urbanization and Mission, provides a this-world realism to the program. The offerings in Chicago each year, available through the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE), makes possible a specialized preparation for urban mission and evangelism.

The program includes the opportunity of an internship, in which a student works with supervision in a mission/evangelism-oriented congregation, either in North America or in a two-thirds world setting. Special funds are available to enable this, given the limited financial resources of seminary students.

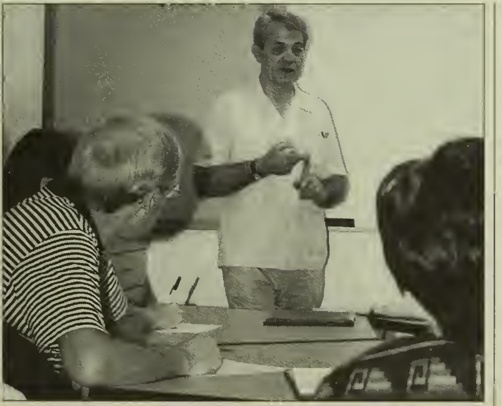
We also intend that the AMBS Mission and Evangelism degree programs be multiculturally diverse. We have developed scholarships for students of ethnic diversity to come to study at AMBS. With more people of color in the class-room the studies themselves take on a "being-in-this-world" authenticity, an essential ingredient of mission-evangelism today.

As you read this, hear the Macedonian call, come to prepare and risk the future for God's mission in this world, to share the good news of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit.

-Willard M. Swartley, Dean

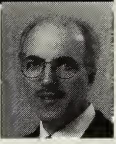


Walter Sawatsky is teaching the course, Rethinking Mennonite History, in two different ways this fall. The class meets on campus four weekends during the semester in intensive Friday evening and Saturday sessions, to make the course accessible to more people from the area surrounding AMBS. The course is offered also on-line so people at a greater distance can participate. Walter is associate professor of church history and mission and is director of the Mission Training Center at AMBS. In addition to teaching at AMBS, Walter is East/West Consultant for Mennonite Central Committee.



Wilbert Shenk, adjunct faculty in mission, regularly teaches a course during the annual summer Mission and Evangelism Intitute at AMBS. This last summer he taught Contemporary Theologies of Mission. The Institute course offerings are in addition to the regular Summer School offerings at AMBS.

President's Window



"Unless the restructured Mennonite denomination is motivated by clear vision and purpose, integration will not be worth the hassle." I have heard a dozen versions of that comment over the past year, and I agree. We need more reason for integration than just greater efficiency and economy; we need a clear sense of mission as a people. I believe the mission that can sustain us will be a delight in calling others to faith in Jesus Christ.

Although the early church sponsored missionaries such as Paul to travel from city to city, the majority of first-century Christians apparently shared their faith locally among friends, neighbors and co-workers. The instruction in 1 Peter 3:15 gives a clue as to how this worked: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." Most early Christians were not engaged in a missionary program. They simply were so full of extravagant hope and radical behavior that people asked questions—and then Christians were prepared to explain.

What if the integrated Mennonite church became a people who both live the way of Jesus and find gracious words to explain why? The sixteenth-century Anabaptists were not satisfied to have just monks and priests live out the Sermon on the Mount; they wanted every member of the church to be "clergy" ("called"). Anabaptists were people who shared possessions, loved enemies, served others, and gave radical allegiance to God alone. Anabaptist renewal was a "grassfire" movement, spreading rapidly throughout society by ordinary people who talked about their faith.

At AMBS there is renewed commitment to the task of speaking the gospel. I thank God for the peacemaking, service and relief efforts of our denomination. Now I want to join others in putting invitational words to what we do at home and overseas. Someone—perhaps years or centuries ago—had the courage and conviction to cross ethnic or cultural boundaries to bring the good news of Jesus to us. Now we as a new denomination can organize our efforts to pass on that gift of hope and life to others.

- J. Nelson Kraybill

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is in the process of renewing its accreditation with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). AMBS currently has full accreditation with NCA and is seeking a ten-year renewal of that accreditation. AMBS invites comments related to the work of the seminary to be sent to NCA no later than one month before February 20-24, 1999, when the NCA evaluation visit to AMBS is scheduled. Comments must be in writing and be signed. Send comments to

North Central Association
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AMBS Panorama

Advent commentaries

The AMBS faculty has again provided commentaries on the lectionary readings for Advent. You can find these on the AMBS web page at http://www.ambs.edu or request them by mail.

New web resources

Check the AMBS web page, http://www.ambs.edu, for access to the AMBS library and other libraries, a list of continuing education events, and commentaries on Advent lectionary readings.

Mission and Evangelism Institute

Summer 1999

Mid-June - mid-July
Global Urbanization and Mission *(Study trip in two-thirds world cities)*
Art McPhee

July 6-10, 12-15
Evangelism in Early Christianity
Alan Kreider
Gospel of John
Willard M. Swartley

July 16-23
Worship and Mission
Eleanor and Alan Kreider
Evangelism and Anabaptism
Stuart Murray
Weekend conference: Worship and Mission
July 16-18
Eleanor and Alan Kreider and Stuart Murray

Mid-July to mid-August
Latin American Workshop *(In Colombia)*
Peter Stucky

July 30-August 6
Leadership for Church Growth *(Includes weekend conference, July 30-31)*
Art McPhee
Communicating the Gospel in our Culture
Wilbert Shenk and Lois Barrett
Conflict, Communication and Conciliation
Richard Blackburn

The above is a tentative list. For a complete list of ***1999 Summer School and Mission and Evangelism Institute offerings****, contact the AMBS admissions office, 219 296-6268 or admissions@ambs.edu.*

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

Editor and designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos: Page 1 - J. Tyler Klassen; pages 2-3 - Mary E. Klassen

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Mennonites, Catholics hold first talks

Meeting's goal: heal memories, develop understanding

STRASBOURG, France—Emphasizing reconciliation rather than doctrinal differences, seven Mennonite and six Roman Catholic theologians met in international dialogue Oct. 14-18 in Strasbourg for the first-ever discussion of the reasons for the centuries-long separation between the two churches.

The meeting, titled "Toward a Healing of Memories," was aimed at promoting better understanding of the two denominations and overcoming prejudices. Held at the Vatican's invitation, the event was sponsored by Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, which is responsible for Catholic Church relations with other churches. The two organizations appointed the meeting participants.

Helmut Harder, who led the Mennonite delegation, termed the meeting "confessional" in two senses. "One, there was an effort to identify the distinctives as well as the convergences in our two confessions [of faith]," says Harder, general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, "and two, there was a readiness to confess our prejudices toward the other church and to seek understanding and reconciliation where this was needed."

Papers, visits and worship: Two sets of papers were presented at the meeting. Each church presented a profile of itself. The Mennonite profile was given by Howard J. Loewen, academic dean at Mennonite Brethren-affiliated Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. The second set of papers focused on reactions to each other in the 16th century, the time of the Radical Reformation and the emergence of Anabaptism. Peter Nissen, a church history professor from the Netherlands, presented the Catholic paper, and Neal Blough, a church history professor and co-director of a Mennonite center in St. Maurice, France, gave the Mennonite presentation.

Consultation participants visited a village outside of Strasbourg where they were welcomed to a Mennonite congregation by its elder, Andre Nussbaumer, and were addressed by a Catholic sociologist of religion, Jean Seguy, on the history of Anabaptist-Mennonite and Catholic relations in France. Marc Lienhard, a Lutheran theologian, shared insights on religious dissidents in 16th-century Strasbourg. Both delegations attended Sunday worship at Strasbourg Evangelical Mennonite Church.

"I learned that some of the core theological divergences of the 16th century are still among the main points of divide," says MWC executive secretary Larry Miller, who served as co-secretary for the meeting. "But I learned also that both Mennonites and Catholics find themselves in a whole new world today, not only because the world around us has changed but also because both churches have changed, not the least as a result of mission and the shifting center of gravity in Christianity —to Africa, Asia and Latin America."

Sorrow and uneasiness: Miller says the head of the Catholic delegation, Bishop John Martino of Philadelphia, "expressed great sorrow" at the history of Anabaptist martyrdom, part of which was suffered at the hands of the Catholic Church.

At the same time, Miller says, "I felt uneasy when we together read Anabaptist texts full of violent language against the Catholic Church. I found myself thinking that our occasional verbal violence was understandable in the 16th-century context—obviously not at all the same as executing someone—but perhaps still some distance from the model offered by Jesus Christ."

At MWC's invitation, a representative of the Pontifical Council attended the MWC assembly in Calcutta in 1997. MWC, representing the worldwide Anabaptist family of faith, in July accepted the council's invitation to dialogue, in part because of the increasing contact between Catholics and Mennonites around the world, especially in Latin America. The Pontifical Council has conducted such dialogues with other churches. Meeting reports are reviewed by the council and ultimately go to the Pope.

Better relations: "I think the fundamental reason [for the invitation] is that the Catholic Church cares theologically and deeply about the unity of the church," Miller says. "The leaders of the Pontifical Council really believe that it is the will of Christ that his disciples seek better relations, that division among Christians is a stumbling block to the world."

The dialogue is expected to continue next October. "We will want to proceed in a way which honors the Anabaptist-Mennonite conviction that fraternal address, just like all church activities, involves as broad a participation of the membership as possible," Miller says.

The hope is to have annual meetings for the next four or five years, "which contribute something to the 'healing of memories' transmitted from the 16th century onward," he says. "Those conversations should ideally contribute also to a fair understanding of one another today and thus open wider the doors of continuing fraternal address and mutual learning in many places of the world."—*MWC News Service*

Members of the Mennonite delegation meeting with Roman Catholic representatives Oct. 14-18 in Strasbourg, France:

- Neal Blough, church history professor and director of the Mennonite Study and Conference Centre, St. Maurice, France
- Helmut Harder, general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Winnpeg
- Mario Higueros, dean, Seminario Anabautista Latinoamericano, Guatemala City
- Andrea Lange, pastor, Weierhof (Germany) Mennonite Church
- Howard J. Loewen, academic dean, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University
- Nzash Lumeya, dean and professor, University Centre for Missiology, Kinshasa, Congo
- Larry Miller, executive secretary, Mennonite World Conference, Strasbourg, France

Among the buildings planned for U.S. Mennonite colleges are the University Commons at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. (left), and an academic center at Bluffton (Ohio) College. Four of the five General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church colleges are currently conducting capital campaigns.

Building up the campuses

Four of five colleges conducting capital campaigns

The Lord loves cheerful givers, according to the old saying. And Hesston (Kan.) College is apparently still finding them.

Alumni from Hesston, a two-year school, often matriculate to four-year Mennonite colleges such as Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. All three schools—plus Bluffton (Ohio) College—are in various stages of fund-raising campaigns. But Hesston president Loren Swartzendruber says he hasn't found his two-year school to be in competition with its four-year counterparts for alumni contributions.

"I've called on donors who have said they won't be able to do as much … because they've had proposals from other institutions," Swartzendruber says.

But those people are relatively few. "Alumni tend to have pretty solid loyalties to one school or another," Swartzendruber says.

Alumni tend to have pretty solid loyalties to one school or another.

—Loren Swartzendruber

Hesston is more than halfway toward its goal for the second phase of its "Enhancing Excellence" capital campaign. For the first stage, the school raised $8.2 million for a science facility, dormitory and administration building renovations and other projects. Fund raising for the $11.3 million second stage has resulted in $6.3 million in cash and pledges. Plans include a library addition, visitor and education center for Dyck Arboretum of the Plains and technological improvements.

A third phase of the campaign is also planned.

Bethel is still in the quiet phase of a capital campaign of $16 million to $18 million. During the phase, the school is soliciting major donors, foundations and corporations. The campaign is expected to enter the public phase in 2000, says Sondra Koontz, director of advancement.

"We are on schedule," she says. "We are pleased with how the campaign is going."

The centerpiece for the campaign will be a new science center, Koontz says. Also in the works are a new residence hall, enhancing endowment and an elevator for Memorial Hall, which contains classrooms and an auditorium.

The campaign has already paid for the renovation of a building to house the admissions department and for campus technological improvements.

EMU on Oct. 16 officially started its $22 million fund-raising campaign for a new University Commons, to be built in two stages. The first will see the construction of a gym, fitness area, offices, classrooms, conference rooms and a commons area including a new bookstore and snack shop. Work will begin when $13 million is raised. About $9 million had already been raised during the campaign's quiet phase.

The project's second stage will see the renovation of the current student center, which will be connected to the University Commons, plus construction of a 500-seat drama theater, classrooms and offices.

Bluffton is in the final nine months of its $15.2 million campaign and has already surpassed two of its three goals. The school has raised $3.2 million for the annual fund, $400,000 more than planned, and $2.7 million for endowment, $1.2 million more than planned.

Bluffton has $7 million toward its target of $10.5 million for capital projects. Ground will be broken in February 1999 for a new academic center, which will include classrooms, offices, and media and computer centers. Yoder Music Hall was built in 1996 as part of the campaign.

Goshen (Ind.) College in 1995 finished a $49.9 million capital campaign.—*Rich Preheim*

Vets spin peace message on the web

AKRON, Pa. — Michael Chandler served in the U.S. Navy in the early 1970s and saw action in Vietnam. Today, he pastors Community Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., and advocates conscientious objection.

"I can no longer take part in the military or in warfare because it is my understanding that Christ came to make peace and restore us to God, leading us to live the way that God meant us to live—at peace," he says.

Until recently, to discuss peace issues with Chandler, one would have to know his address or phone number.

Now, just double click.

Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) "Ask-a-Vet" website gives youth and anyone with questions about militarism, conscientious objection or registration an opportunity to discuss their views and ideas via the Internet. Several veterans, including Chandler, are featured on the site. Click on their names for a brief description of their military service and their decision to embrace nonviolence and peace. Visitors, especially youth, are encouraged to e-mail questions about peace or being a conscientious objector to war.

"The web is increasingly a place people, especially young people, go for information, where opinions and perspectives are openly debated and discussed," says Titus Peachey, MCC staff associate for peace education. "It's an important place for MCC to be talking about war, peace and faith.

He says "Ask-a-Vet" gives options to youth wondering if there is another way to honor God and the church: "What are the options for someone in high school about to register with Selective Service? Is there another option? Is the military lifestyle as good as it sounds? And how do I get to college and get college loans if I don't register?"

The site also provides a list of books and articles about conscientious objection, peacemaking and military service, plus links to other peace-oriented sites.—*John M. Spidaliere of MCC News Service*

To visit "Ask-a-Vet," point the browser to Mennonite Central Committee's website at www.mbnet.mb.ca/mcc/ and click on"What's New," or key in www.mbnet.mb.ca/mcc/ask-a-vet.

Bangladesh to get $500,000 in MCC help after worst flooding of the century

AKRON, Pa.— Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is appealing for nearly $500,000 to help Bangladesh recover from the century's worst flooding, which left 10 million people homeless and affected another 20 million people.

Torrential rains in early September caused rivers to crest higher than ever before, and the water remained relentlessly high for more than 70 days, covering 70 percent of the country. The receding water left 1.9 million acres of crop land damaged. Many farm families will have no food for months unless they are able to plant in the next several weeks. Farmers who cultivated small fish ponds watched their investment swim down the river.

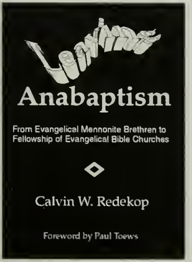
Suraiya Chowdhury, one of some 200 Bangladeshi MCC staff members, was distressed by the sight of sick children. "I want to go back to those villages, collect all the small children and get them safely to a dry shelter," she says. "They have no money, no food and no way to clean their water."

MCC will provide $211,921 to supply 10,000 families with wheat, potato, bean, corn and other seeds, plus fertilizer. Another $210,417 will go for building 1,200 new homes and repairing 500 homes of the region's poorest families. MCC will also spend $50,000 to supply seeds and construct houses for 245 families who produce crafts sold through Ten Thousand Villages, MCC's job-creation program.

MCC will also supply $4,000 to provide 8,000 farmers with deworming medicine, $15,000 for medical supplies for 40 orphanages and clinics and 6,800 metric tons of wheat for food-for-work programs.

MCC in mid-September distributed emergency food valued at $10,000, enough to feed 3,600 families for four or five days.—*MCC News Service*

Pandora Press U.S. Book News


Leaving
Anabaptism
From Evangelical Mennonite Brethren to Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches
Calvin W. Redekop
Foreword by Paul Toews

Leaving Anabaptism

From Evangelical Mennonite Brethren to Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches

Calvin W. Redekop

James C. Juhnke: "Shows church revitalization can come at the high cost of losing original core values."

Katie Funk Wiebe: "A challenge to church bodies that feel rejection of Anabaptist-Mennonite teachings is essential for growth."

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On the other side of the bell curve

Daughter with Down syndrome focus of artist's work

We see angels as ephemeral, not misshapen, not overweight. I don't think that is accurate. Christian faith is completely tied up with people with all their foibles.

—Merrill Krabill

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—In Merrill Krabill's eyes, his 23-month-old daughter, Emily, is like her older brother, Seth. She climbs onto everything. She gets her share of ear infections. She loves to laugh.

But in the summer of 1996, when Krabill and his wife, Kris, learned there was a strong possibility that their second child would be born with Down syndrome, they were anxious and afraid of what their future would hold as parents of a child with a developmental disability.

"It's not what you want to hear, obviously," says Krabill, associate professor of art at Bethel College, North Newton. "There is a feeling like you're giving your life away to this."

While the Krabills' parenting style hasn't changed much since their daughter's birth, their views of what is normal and abnormal have changed. Now, for example, when Krabill goes grocery shopping with Emily, he no longer is as aware of the fact that he is carrying a Down syndrome child in his arms.

"I've gotten to a point where I'm not embarrassed by other people's measurements," Krabill says. "Emily is Emily to me."

She is the subject of Krabill's art exhibit, "Inquiry Into Gifts," which opened Nov. 6 in the Bethel Fine Arts Center Gallery and will run through Dec. 18. Krabill worked on the series of photographic images during his 1997-1998 sabbatical. The prints are collage-like compositions developed with computer software.

The exhibit also includes poems by Jeff Gundy, Raylene Hinz-Penner and Jean Janzen.

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Merrill Krabill, associate professor of art at Bethel College, and his 23-month-old daughter, Emily. She is the focus of a new exhibit by Krabill on the Bethel campus in North Newton, Kan.

Creating art linked specifically to his personal life is new territory for Krabill. His previous pieces have most often been sculpture focused on "noble ideals," he says. One set of images in "Inquiry Into Gifts" examines the bell curve or normal curve. The prints "correct" Emily's physical characteristics in terms of the societal norm.

"I think most of my life, in things people measure, I've found myself on the side of the bell curve where people want to be," Krabill says. "For most of Emily's life, again for the things people measure, she will be on the side people don't usually choose."

He is "processing ideals I have, ... recognizing that these ideals do not make sense for any child," Krabill says. "How I view Emily depends on how I orient my thinking. There are different ways of seeing and doing.

"Down syndrome offers something to the world that doesn't come from other sources. If we could get rid of everybody with a disability, it would not be a service to the world."

Krabill hopes "Inquiry Into Gifts" reflects the complexity that is an inherent part of the human experience.

"The sacred isn't otherworldly," he says. "I have an image of the angel pin my mom gave me after she learned that Emily would have Down syndrome. It is so easy to get cliche. ... We see angels as ephemeral, not misshapen, not overweight. I don't think that is accurate. Christian faith is completely tied up with people with all their foibles."—*Carla Reimer*

Workers

Brubacher, Margaret, Ephrata, Pa., is beginning a one-year assignment with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Akron, Pa., as a receptionist.
Chiles, Lawrence, has been named associate director of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) Home Ministries, Salunga, Pa.
Delaplane, Cheryl, Ames, Okla., is beginning a three-year assignment with MCC in Mozambique as a community development worker.
Emswiler, Jan, Harrisonburg, Va., is beginning a three-year assignment with MCC in Tanzania as a community health worker.
Epp, Ed, has been appointed Mennonite Economic Development Associates director of international operations, Winnipeg.
George, David, Landisville, Pa., is beginning a one-year assignment with MCC in Akron, Pa., as a store systems analyst for Ten Thousand Villages.
Hanes, Jim and Paula, Washington, Ill., are beginning four-year assignments in Senegal with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions.
Johnson, Mary Ann Brenneman began Sept. 23 as music minister at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.
Liscum-Moore, Grant, Haddonfield, N.J., is beginning a two-year assignment with MCC in Haddonfield as a Ten Thousand Villages store manager.
Martin, Ruth, Willow Street, Pa., is beginning a two-year assignment with MCC in Akron, Pa., as wholesale sales manager for Ten Thousand Villages.
Miller, J. Brian, has been named Latin America administrator for EMM Discipleship Ministries, Salunga, Pa.
Mininger, Mary and Phil, were installed Sept. 20 as pastors at Paoli (Ind.) Mennonite Fellowship.
Oberholtzer, Kristin, has been named news service writer for EMM Communications, Salunga, Pa.
Parks, Burt, was installed Oct. 11 as pastor at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.
Schmell, Barry, has concluded a pastorate at Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.
Stauffer, Beverly, Alma, Kan., is beginning a one-year assignment with MCC in New Orleans as a program coordinator.

Births

Brost, Sydney Carlyn, Oct. 10, to Jeff and Tonya (Kanagy) Brost, Richey, Mont.
Burkholder, Jessica Rae, Oct. 12, to Leland and Trina (Zimmerman) Burkholder, Mifflintown, Pa.
Byer, Cameron Lee, Oct. 20, to Barbara and Owen Byer, Orange City, Iowa.
Campbell, Christina Nicole, Sept. 28, to Jeff and Pam (Kiser) Campbell, Harrisonburg, Va.
Edenfield, Rebecca Lynn, Oct. 6, to Brad and Lisa (Hackman) Edenfield, St. Petersburg, Fla.
Esh, Ann Marie, Sept. 10, 1991, received for adoption Sept. 16, 1998, by Robert and Sharon (Carter) Esh, Corry, Pa.
Esh, Loretta, May 8, 1995, received for adoption Sept. 16, 1998, by Robert and Sharon (Carter) Esh, Corry, Pa.
Gobbett, Matthew William Robert, Sept. 18, to Brian and Heather Gobbett, Edmonton.
Harris, Brooke Mae and Kyler Jay (twins), Oct. 21, to John and Sherry (Appleby) Harris, Fannettsburg, Pa.
Kotlin, Nicholas Daniel, Oct. 19, to Dave and Kate (Bender) Kotlin, Aurora, Ohio.
Landis, Kale Brandt, Sept. 9, to Boni (Gochenaur) and John Landis, Lititz, Pa.
Miller, Matthew Thomas, Oct. 10, to James and Norma (Byler) Miller, Hartville, Ohio.
Motzko, Connor Gordon, Oct. 6, to Dale and Jodi (Kauffman) Motzko, West Liberty, Ohio.
Moyer, Hannah Jo, Oct. 12, to Amy (Miller) and Todd Moyer, Lititz, Pa.
Oyer, Jared Phillip, Oct. 17, to Stan and Vonnie (Miller) Oyer, Hubbard, Ore.
Penner, Ryan Thomas, Oct. 8, to Paige (Foust) and Tom Penner, Racine, Wis.
Powell, Elijah Kendal, Sept. 28, to David and Krista (King) Powell, Richmond, Va.
Reibling, Delaney Marie, Sept. 25, to Dana (Becker) and Dayle Reibling, Bright, Ont.
Schrock, Seth Donald, Oct. 19, to Christi (Newcomer) and Shannon Schrock, Shipshewana, Ind.
Swiers, Janessa Kaye, Oct. 10, to Jesse and Rhonda (Muff) Swiers, Ogema, Minn.
Troyer, Brady Lee, Oct. 8, to Betty (Weaver) and David Troyer, Fredericksburg, Ohio.
Wagler, Cassidy Bena, Aug. 9, to Reg and Tammy (Kunz) Wagler, New Hamburg, Ont.
Yantzi, Bryce Aaron, Sept. 8, to Kevin and Tanya (Becker) Yantzi, Tavistock, Ont.

Marriages

Bast/Bisbort: Kristen Bast, Woodville, N.Y., and Curtis Bisbort, Alburtis, Pa., Oct. 10 at Watertown (N.Y.) Mennonite Church.
Croyle/Terek: Scott Croyle, Johnstown, Pa., and Lisa Terek, Johnstown, Sept. 19 at Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.
DeBoer/Nitzsche: Justin DeBoer, Lincoln, Neb., and Angela Nitzsche, Lincoln, Oct. 3 at Beemer (Neb.) Mennonite Church.
DeHart/Yoder: Jennifer DeHart, Corvallis, Ore., and DeVon Yoder, Corvallis, Oct. 3.
Doll/Wehrlin: Alice Doll, Canton, Ohio, and Joseph Wehrlin, Uniontown, Ohio, Sept. 19 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.
Dreier/Stucky: Nicole Dreier, Leawood, Kan., and Christopher Stucky, North Newton, Kan., Oct. 10 at Church of the Resurrection, Leawood.
Foral/Moody: Stephen Foral, Wichita, Kan., and Buffy Moody, Newton, Kan., Sept. 11.
Gerber/Mast: James Gerber, Brutus, Mich., and Barbara Mast, Stevens, Pa., Sept. 5 at Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite Church.
Graber/Schlatter: LaVerne Graber, Wayland, Iowa, and Ruth Swartzendruber Leichty Schlatter, Wayland, Oct. 10 at Eicher Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Wayland.
Helmuth/Riddell: Charlene Helmuth, Woodstock, Ont., and Bryan Riddell, Woodstock, Sept. 26.
Holden/Pettit: Jack Holden, Harrisonburg, Va., and Clara Pettit, Harrisonburg, Sept. 13.
Huang/Schrag: Tina Huang, Hillsboro, Kan., and David Schrag, Newton, Kan., Oct. 10.
Jordan/Mast: Brendan Jordan, Hartville, Ohio, and Mary Beth Mast, Hartville, Oct. 16 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.
Kaczmarek/Matteson: Anna Kaczmarek, Krakow, Poland, and Ben Matteson, Knoxville, Tenn., Sept. 26 at Krakow.
Keller/Kuhns: Mandy Keller, Chambersburg, Pa., and Gregory Kuhns, Chambersburg, Oct. 17 at Chambersburg.
Kirbride/Reibling: Jason Kirbride, Tavistock, Ont., and Allison Reibling, Tavistock, Oct. 13 at Jamaica.
Lewis/Seidel: Loretta Lewis, Wellsville, N.Y., and John Seidel, Willcox, Ariz., Aug. 8 at Wellsville.
Mahaney/Schrag: Shannon Mahaney, Wichita, Kan., and Janet Schrag, Newton, Kan., Sept. 26.
Miller/Miller: Lydell Mitchell Miller, Sugarcreek, Ohio, and Ruth Miller, Sugarcreek, Oct. 10 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.
O'Brien/Troyer: Calleen Lynn O'Brien, Tempe, Ariz., and George Daniel Troyer, Mesa, Ariz., Sept. 18 at Koinonia Mennonite Church, Chandler, Ariz.
Phillips/Wagler: Mitchell Phillips, Louisville, Ohio, and Wynette Wagler, North Canton, Ohio, Sept. 26 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.
Sauder/Tyler: Mary Sauder, Pioneer, Ohio, and Brent Tyler, Defiance, Ohio, Oct. 24 at Pioneer.
Williams/Yoder: Amanda Williams, Streetsboro, Ohio, and Ben Yoder, Aurora, Ohio, Oct. 17 at North Lima (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

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*Gift annuities are not available in California.

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Deaths

Balsiger, Gertrude, 90, Berne, Ind., died Oct. 4. Parents: Alina and Chris Balsiger (deceased). Survivors: siblings Eldon Balsiger, Vera Lehman, Helen Sprunger. Memorial service: Oct. 7 at First Mennonite Church, Berne.

Brown, Abner, 88, Wakarusa, Ind., died Oct. 1. Spouse: Vivian Brown. Other survivors: children Abner Jr., Kermit, LaVeda Bontrager, Annabelle Nisen, Glendora Brown; 18 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 4 at Wakarusa.

Brown, Lowell, 84, Wakarusa, Ind., died Oct. 13. Survivors: children Betty Mann, Harry, Dean, John; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Wakarusa.

Countryman, Gilbert, 86, Burley, Idaho, died Oct. 3. Survivors: children Wendell, Gayle Marie Nadeau; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 6.

Ebersole, Dean, 50, Manheim, Pa., died Oct. 15 of heart disease. Spouse: Jean Martin Ebersole. Parents: Abner and Emma Ginder Ebersole. Other survivors: children Krista, Brenton, Craig. Funeral: Oct. 19 at Manheim.

Geiser, Martha Steiner, 81, Apple Creek, Ohio, died Oct. 7 of a heart attack. Spouse: Herman Geiser (deceased). Parents: Menno and Sarah Steiner (deceased). Survivors: children Larry, Kenneth, Dorothy Sawysgood, Carolyn Riegsecker; four grandchildren; two stepgrandchildren; three stepgreat-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Wooster, Ohio.

Good, Bessie Kaufman, 99, Hopedale, Ill., died Oct. 22. Spouse: Alvin Good (deceased). Parents: Peter and Mary Eigsti Kaufman (deceased). Survivors: children Walter, Marcella Kossen, Oleta Bachman, Eileen Nafziger, Lola Kauffman, Helen Mumaw, Marilyn Kauffman; 33 grandchildren; 55 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Headings, Mary Miller, 95, South Hutchinson, Kan., died Oct 20. Survivors: children Keith, Robert, Phillip, Sanford, Lois Burrell; 16 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren; 17 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23.

Hershey, Raymond Jr., 78, White Hall, Pa., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Mabel Hershey. Other survivors: son, Kenneth; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial at Kinzer, Pa.

Horsch, Caroline Hofmeister, 81, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Oct. 11 of a heart attack. Survivors: children Gladyne Swartz, Kenneth, Dwight; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Aberdeen.

Keller, Margaret Virginia Rhodes, 85, Bridgewater, Va., died Aug. 30 of cancer. Spouse: Harry Keller (deceased). Parents: Emmer and Stella Heatwole Rhodes (deceased). Survivors: children Louise Heatwole, Stanley, Roy; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 2.

Kriner, Regina Davis, 64, Wooster, Ohio, died Aug. 28 of a stroke. Parents: Orin and Marjorie Davis. Other survivors: children Linda Rogers, Susan Chio; six grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1 at Wooster.

Landis, Alvin, 89, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 13. Survivors: children Charlotte, Ray, David; 15 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Franconia, Pa.

Leaman, Mary Groff, 95, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 10. Spouse: Sanford Leaman (deceased). Parents: Christian and Erma Neff Groff (deceased). Survivors: children Chester, Paul, Sanford, Daniel, Anna Geib, Miriam Segerstrom, Ruth Nissley, Irene Shenk; 34 grandchildren; 77 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 14 at New Danville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Lederman, Edythe Adella Amstutz, 91, Leo, Ind., died Oct. 16. Parents: Gideon and Eliza Amstutz (deceased). Survivors: children Donabell Nofziger, Maredith Vendrely, Richard; nine grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 19 at Leo.

Lehman, Florence Kirchhofer, 93, Berne, Ind., died Oct. 5. Spouse: Reuben Lehman (deceased). Parents: Amos and Emma Kirchhofer (deceased). Survivors: children Leon, Elsie Stensen, Carol Bixler, Marietta Peters; 12 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 8 at First Mennonite Church, Berne.

Liechty, Ruth, 94, Berne, Ind., died Oct. 12. Parents: Emma and Jerry Liechty (deceased). Survivors: sisters Anna Barbara Neuenschwander, Dorcas Nussbaum, Marie Rummel, Miriam Sprunger. Memorial service: Oct. 15 at First Mennonite Church, Berne.

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Litwiller, William Sr., 82, Minier, Ill., died Oct. 23. Spouse: Marguerite King Litwiller. Parents: Simon and Katie Ehrisman Litwiller (deceased). Other survivors: children William Jr., Rita, Karen Yoder, Rosalie Semick, Roberta Bean; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Hopedale, (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Musselman, Russell, 86, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 17. Spouse: Esther Clemmer Musselman. Parents: Henry and Katie Bean Musselman (deceased). Other survivors: children John, Gerald; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 22 at Souderton.

Musselman, Ruth Miller, 91, Chambersburg, Pa., died Sept. 30 of a stroke. Spouse: Howard Musselman (deceased). Parents: Eli and Amanda Miller (deceased). Survivors: children Janet Snyder, Joyce Shutt, Ann Naylor; 14 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Fairfield (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Osborne, Garland, 66, Greensburg, Kan., died Aug. 28 of cancer. Spouse: Phyllis Osborne; Parents: Robert and Viola Osborne (deceased). Other survivors: children Rhonda Kelley, Eddie, Tammie Schmidt, Jana, Brenda; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 31 at Greensburg Mennonite Church.

Peifer, Elizabeth Kreider, 79, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 12. Spouse: Clarence Peifer. Parents: Amaziah and Luette Kreider Hostetter (deceased). Other survivors: children John, Kenneth, Ann Eberly, Elsie Weaver, Joy Miller; 11 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Ramseyer, Mary Ann Roth, 98, Tavistock, Ont., died Oct. 11. Survivors: children Oliver, Melvin, Donald, Mayne, Earl, Paul, Helen Zehr, Edith Schneider, Elaine Novah; 27 grandchildren; 48 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Tavistock.

Reschly, Floyd, 85, Olds, Iowa, died Oct. 3 of a heart attack. Spouse: first wife Hazel Richard Reschly (deceased); second wife Clara Cannon Reschly. Parents: William and Katie Swartzendruber Reschly (deceased). Other survivors: children Kenneth, Richard, Ruth Ann Miller, Barbara King; stepchildren Max Cannon, Lynn Rew; seven grandchildren; four stepgrandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two stepgreat-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 6 at Wayland, Iowa.

Roth, Garry Jay, 58, Milford, Neb., died Oct. 14 of brain cancer. Parents: Nick (deceased) and Thelma Stutzman Roth. Other survivors: children Renee Reyes, Randy; four grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at East Fairview Mennonite Church, Milford.

Stauffer, Viola, 83, Milford, Neb., died Oct. 15. Spouse: Clarence Stauffer. Parents: Melvin and Mary Saltzman Troyer (deceased). Other survivors: children Larry, Roger, Rosemary Martin, Jon, Victor; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 19 at Milford.

Steckly, Stanley, 66, Milverton, Ont., died Sept. 13 of cancer. Spouse: Doris Leis Steckly. Parents: Menno and Sarah Kipfer Steckly (deceased). Other survivors: children Wendy Weber, Rodney, Perry; six grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 16 at Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank, Ont.

Stutzman, Maxine Grace Earnest, 76, Milford, Neb., died Oct. 16. Spouse: Wayne Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Emma Herman Earnest (deceased). Survivors: children Kim, Claude; six grandchildren; three stepgrandchildren; one stepgreat-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 19 at East Fairview Mennonite Church, Milford.

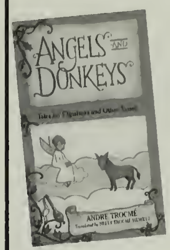
Thomas, Verna, 81, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 16. Spouse: Clayton Thomas. Parents: Christian and Mary Groff Hess (deceased). Other survivors: children Clyde, James; seven grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 20 at New Danville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Wiebe, Karl, 86, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Oct. 3 of complications from Alzheimer's disease. Survivors: children Howard, Charlie, Doris Kohlenberg, Carol Boerger; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 7 at Aberdeen.

Wine, Claude Raymond, 92, Waynesboro, Va., died Oct. 10 of heart failure. Spouse: Beulah Wine. Parents: Edward and Lula Wine (deceased). Other survivors: children Joyce Hulvey, Dorothy Rhodes; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Waynesboro.

Winters, Donald, 47, Philadelphia, died Sept. 13. Parents: Oscar (deceased) and Sarah Winters. Memorial services Oct. 4 at Hanover, Pa., and Oct. 25 at Germantown, Pa.

Christmas Suggestions



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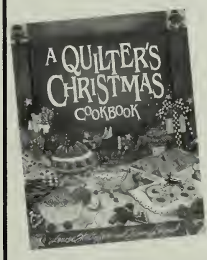

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Yoder, Freda Hartzler, 85, West Liberty, Ohio, died Oct. 4. Spouse: Clifford Yoder. Parents: Arthur and Clara Yoder Hartzler (deceased). Other survivors: children Edith Shore, Helen Metzger, Daniel, Duane, Elvin, Wayne; 15 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Burial: Oct. 8 at West Liberty.

Yoder, William, 86, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 14. Survivors: children Alice Risser, Nancy Nofziger, Marion, Charles, John; 16 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Burial: Aug. 17 at Middlebury, Ind.

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classifieds

- **Pondered in Her Heart—Hannah's Book: Inside and Outside**, a novel by Elaine Sommers Rich, published by Wordsworth, 702 NE 24th St., Newton, KS 67114-9275. ***Order now for Christmas giving.*** $15.95 postpaid (Kansas residents add $.76 sales tax).

- **Belmont Mennonite Church** seeks one half-time ***associate pastor***. Responsibilities include adult discipleship, pastoral care, children/youth ministries and some preaching. Applications should include Mennonite Ministerial Leadership Information form (MMLI).

  Please send application to Belmont Mennonite Church Search Committee, 925 Oxford St., Elkhart, IN 46516. For questions, contact Paul Gingrich, 219-295-7709; email Gingrich@juno.com. Applications will be considered beginning Nov. 20, 1998.

- **Camp Friedenswald** seeks a ***bookkeeper/registrar***. This full-time year-round person is responsible for camp's bookkeeping, payroll items, database management and oversight of program camp registrations. Qualifications include bachelor's degree with accounting background and willingness to help with other aspects of camp life. Compensation includes salary, housing and comprehensive medical insurance. Position available Jan. 1.

  Contact Christopher Gill at 616-476-9744, or write to Camp Friedenswald, 15406 Watercress Drive, Cassopolis, MI 49031.

- **For rent: *Universal design home*** (furnished/unfurnished) with superior living space/view, comfort and efficiency in semi-rural settting. Great bed and breakfast potential. Central Pennsylvania north of Harrisburg. Universities/hospitals available; professional, historical and cultural activities. Particularly suited for pre- or post-retirement or physically challenged people.

  Send interest to Universal Home, P.O. Box 362, Lewisburg, PA 17837; fax 717-743-1911.

- **Salford Mennonite Church** is seeking candidates for ***youth pastor***. Salford Mennonite Church is located in Harleysville, Pa., about 30 miles north of Philadelphia. Candidates should hold strong Anabaptist beliefs and have a passion for youth. The youth pastor position is currently half-time, but Salford welcomes candidates seeking full-time or part-time ministry opportunities.

  Interested people may respond in writing to Youth Pastor Search Committee, Salford Mennonite Church, 480 Groff's Mill Road, Harleysville, PA 19438; 215-256-0778; email mail@salfordmc.org.

- **Souderton Mennonite Homes,** a growing continuing care retirement community, is seeking a ***full-time pastor*** and a ***part-time associate pastor.*** Key responsibilities will include the assessment and ongoing nurture of our residents' spiritual needs through visitation, leading groups and planning and leading worship services. The ability to team with other staff members and to develop linkages with home church pastors is vital.

  Interested individuals should fax resume with salary requirements to 215-723-9876, attn. Lisa Peirce; or mail resumes to Souderton Mennonite Homes, 207 W. Summit St., Souderton, PA 18964.

- **Spruce Lake Retreat** seeks ***executive director*** to provide leadership in camping ministries, vision and development. Appropriate education and experience required. Spruce Lake Retreat is a year-round facility of Franconia Mennonite Camping Association, located in northeastern Pennsylvania. Information about our facilities and program is available at www.sprucelake.org.

  Apply to Dennis Gehman, 616 Allentown Road, Telford, PA 18969-2204; email dennis@gehmanbuilder.com.

- **Upward Call Counseling Services:** We offer professional counseling with a Christian foundational premise that God unfailingly desires relationship with us who unfailingly need restoration. Counseling with individuals, couples, families; adults and children. Consultation to Mennonite, Wenger Mennonite, Horning Mennonite and Amish ministers who have members needing additional professional counseling.

  For further information, contact Robert Weaver, LSW, BCD, director, Upward Call Counseling Services, 150 E. Franklin St., New Holland, PA 17557; 717-355-2117.

by Gordon Houser

Advertising surrounds us, interrupts the programs we watch on television or the music we listen to on the radio, clutters our highways and city streets, not to mention the newspapers and magazines we read (including this one).

We may try to ignore them, but that proves difficult. We can at least think about what they say and reflect critically about them. We must also help our children do this, since they are often the target of advertisers.

Ads are basically a way of communicating information about a product. And given today's market, the media are increasingly dependent on advertising to pay the bills. *The Mennonite* is a case in point. To continue operation, this magazine depends on income primarily from subscriptions and advertising. If advertising income lags too much, then subscription prices will increase. The editors, however, only include ads from advertisers whose ministry they can affirm. You won't see alcohol, cigarette or ROTC ads in *The Mennonite.*

What bothers people most are the messages of ads and the products they promote. My son notices that the best ads are usually for beer or junk food. As long as we don't allow the enjoyment of the ad to persuade us to buy the product, fine. But we don't always recognize the subtle power of ads. Consumerism is a sickness that feeds on ads. Thus our antennae must be tuned to that danger.

Raymond Schroth writes in the *National Catholic Reporter* about the annual Schmio Awards given to companies whose advertising has done the most to harm the planet or diminish human dignity. He reports that this year the "Jonesboro Award" went to the National Rifle Association for seducing children into the love of guns. Comedian Dick Gregory, Schroth reports, denounced "billboard companies who plaster booze and tobacco ads all over black and Hispanic neighborhoods and fight civic leaders who seek to curtail the ads' destructive influences." The awards' sponsors noted that 40 percent of U.S. secondary school children are required to start their day with news and commercials on Channel 1.

Let's think about ads' influences and talk about them with our children.

Graceless ads

by Ted Lewis

Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.—Jonah 2:8

I'm looking at a magazine ad for cigarettes. Two men and two women are all tangled up, having lots of fun playing football. I'm listening to a radio ad for a furniture store. Those who buy now may win a free trip to Hawaii. I'm watching a TV ad for a car. A solitary driver with a serene look winds through scenic stretches of desert.

I'll never buy these products. But these ads affect me. They trigger my imagination to place myself into desirable settings. They draw attention to what's lacking in my current life. The result? Discontentment.

True, ads work when more people buy the products. But they also work on our pysches. Ad imagery creates a measuring system telling us our lives are not good enough. Things can be better. And to get more, to be better, we have to work for it. There's no place for grace.

Paul writes: "You foolish Galatians! Having received a gospel of grace, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Galatians 3:1-3 paraphrase). Instead of Jewish purity codes we now face a yoke of extravagant expectations. Just as Jews could never keep the whole law, we can never fully participate in the images of advertisements.

Idol worship posed a similar challenge: Doing a particular ritual may lead to a particular reward. But participation with idols, say the prophets, exchanges God's glory for the glory of human-made images. The bottom line: It gives people more control. The irony is that idols also gain a degree of power to control people. Like ceremonial law. Like ads for cars and cigarettes. Unfortunately, grace is left out of the picture.

Ted Lewis attends Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan.

films

Beloved, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, is a haunting book. The movie version (rated R), directed by Jonathan Demme, is amazingly faithful to the book, though it's impossible to translate Morrison's lush language to the screen. While uneven and perhaps hard to follow for those unfamiliar with the book, the film is beautifully shot and superbly acted.

For something different, try π (unrated), written and directed by Darren Aronofsky. This low-budget film portrays a math genius (Sean Gullette) who looks for mathematical patterns in nature. It's not everyone's cup of tea, but at least it raises metaphysical questions. And it is indeed different.

TV

Did you see the four-part documentary *Africans in America* on PBS in October? If not, find someone who, like me, taped it. It will broaden your knowledge of U.S. history.

music

Singing at the Fire: Voices of Anabaptist Martyrs (Faith & Life Press, $15.95 U.S., $19.95 Cdn.) combines choral settings of 10 Anabaptist hymns and martyr ballads, original poetry and three solo organ pieces. I most enjoyed the chants and hymns, least the Amish singing and the organ pieces, which, however, reflect the pain of martyrdom. Not for everyone.

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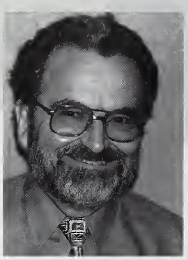
J. Lorne Peachey

Persistence and delight

Mennonites want to be a biblical people. The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective says so: "We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God. … We commit ourselves to persist and delight in reading, studying and meditating on the Scriptures."

Persistence? I understand that part. In my attempts to deal with the Bible, I've read it systematically from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21 at least twice. I've gone book by book based on what I'm in the mood for: praise, prophecy, history. Then there was the time I even memorized a whole book—but that was in sixth grade, for which I got a black ceramic horse and snatches of passages that still come back to me. But don't ask me to repeat all of Ephesians now!

But delight? No, I must confess that too often my time with the Bible can better be described as drudgery, a word that doesn't even appear in the confession. Part of the reason may be the Bible's familiarity—I know the end of the story even before I begin. For one who seldom reads anything twice, coming more than once to the Bible takes persistence.

I read these stories and realize … God's miracles go beyond any stupidity that I can dredge up.

I also suspect my Bible reading has often been more drudgery than delight because I don't expect all that much from it. So I must admit to skepticism when someone recently urged me to reread the stories of the Bible's heroes, but this time looking for the unusual, the different, even the bizarre. I took the challenge and, to my surprise, found:

- Peter, that apostle on whom Jesus built his church. Where is he after the resurrection? Fishing in the nude! When Jesus shows up, Peter pulls on his clothes and jumps into the water (common sense would have it the other way round, would it not? But then read the story for yourself in John 21:4-8).
- Moses, who sees his staff turn into a snake and then back into a rod, after which his own hand turns leprous, only to be healed on the spot. Moses ignores both miracles to continue complaining to God about his inability to be a crowd-moving orator (Exodus 4:1-17).

I reread these stories, and I realize that if God can use Peter and Moses—and dozens like them—in spite of screw-ups and bizarre behavior, God can use me. God's miracles go beyond any stupidity I can dredge up. That knowledge leads me to worship and to praise.

Reading the Bible to find the unusual may not be the best way to deal with it seriously. But for me, for now, it has brought new energy and new insight. Persistence has turned into delight.—*jlp*

The difference the Bible makes

Does persistent work with the Bible make a difference in one's life? To find out, we wrote to 30 people in the church and asked them, "What changes have you made in your life in the last two years because of your involvement with God's Word?"

To date seven of these have replied with features we're putting into a series called Transformations. Six more writers have promised articles. The first of these features appears in this issue, and the others will follow every other week or so for the next two to three months.

What you'll find is a variety of approaches to the Bible in these articles, from opening the Bible at random to deliberately meditating on the Word to find meaning. One writer was changed as the result of preaching a sermon on a particular text, another by attending a conference built around a biblical passage. Another systematically reads the Bible to find meaningful verses while still another pages randomly through God's Word to find comfort.

Out of all these approaches, one thing becomes clear. When we take the time and effort to persist in reading and understanding the Bible, it can and will speak to us. And it will change our lives. On this the writers of our Transformations series are unanimous.

May their experiences as recorded in this series be inspiration for persistent and delightful work with the Bible by us all.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

November 17, 1998

I was a stranger...

6 Marching in the reign of God
8 Mennonite hospitals dying out
9 Assisting in wake of Mitch's devastation
16 You can go home again

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Supporting principles

The chalking incident on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus has strengthened our commitment as a community to find ways to resolve conflict peacefully ("Goshen College Strives to Mend Relationships Following Homosexuality Controversy," Oct. 20). Here are four principles that guide our actions:

1. On issues of nonviolence and active peacemaking we stand with the Mennonite Church. We deplore threats or violent actions against any individual or group. We also provide for the physical and emotional safety of all students. At all times, including when conflicts occur, our goal is not only to teach peacemaking but also to model it within our campus community.

2. We desire to be a community that recognizes differences among us and prepares us to live, work and minister in a world populated by many kinds of people. We invite students to follow Jesus Christ, accepting God's salvation through him and, like him, to radiate God's love to the world.

3. On issues of sexuality we also stand with the position of the Mennonite Church. The church guides us by stressing the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman. For this reason, we call unmarried students to celibacy and create policies in residence halls that support that requirement.

4. We welcome all students meeting our entrance requirements to attend Goshen College. We call upon our students to observe the moral practices outlined in our "Standards for Guiding Our Life Together." If standards are violated, the community responds to the violation through a process that both disciplines the violator and restores harmony to the community.

Like other institutions with high moral and religious standards, we seek to use every resource at our disposal to prevent incidents of this kind, and when they do occur, we seek to use the conflict as an educational tool for ongoing growth. These occasions call for wisdom and strength. We thank the many members of the church and community who have answered our call to prayer. Those prayers are being answered.—*Shirley H. Showalter, president, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.*

After reading about the chalkings at Goshen College, I am confused about the thinking of the Mennonite church. I agree with the article that the chalkers were out of line for writing threatening and vulgar messages. But I do have a big problem with the rest of the article. It looks down on the chalkers, but it upholds the homosexual-support group, the Advocates. Are the Advocates supporting homosexuality, as the name implies? If not, what are they supporting? Are they supporting the sinner and not the sin? Or both?

I am astonished and upset that the Mennonite church is taking a casual stand toward homosexuality and its supporters. Homosexuality, like any other sin, is repulsive to God. I hope and pray that Mennonites will understand the tragedy of sin and learn to take a stand against it.—*Melissa Metzler, Lititz, Pa.*

Threats to good decisions

Re "Membership Issue Could Result in Withdrawals by Congregations, Say Area Conference Leaders" (Oct. 20): Leaving an intolerable or even just a frustrating situation makes sense. But what about the threat to leave? That is often a form of relational blackmail. To me, the principle is clear: Threats to leave in any situation are an attempt to force the other party, even if it is in the majority, to do what it does not wish to do.

We, as the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, have some big decisions to make. We need to arrive at as broad a consensus as possible on those decisions. People and churches must feel free to say what they will or will not vote for. And they should feel free to join or not join after the decisions are made. My request is that planners and all of us in decision-making roles pay no attention to those who say, "If such and such a decision is made, my congregation will leave." This is not because we don't care about people leaving. In fact, it is because we care so much about making good decisions that we choose never to make any decisions based on anyone's threat to leave.—*George Lehman, Bluffton, Ohio*

Celebrating integration

I found the new integration mission statement vaguely disturbing ("Integration Gets Mission Statement," Oct. 6). I found the tone of the statement to be rather grim. There are no references either to God's love or to celebration. The middle section has the verbs "follow," "practice" and "work" as its focus. While these are estimable values, one of the good things that has happened to many Mennonites is that they have discovered the experience of God to be something other than hard work. Could we say "celebrate Jesus Christ as Lord"

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Vol. 1, No. 37, November 17, 1998

features

4 **Welcome the stranger among you**
Practicing God's love requires faithfulness. It may also be illegal.

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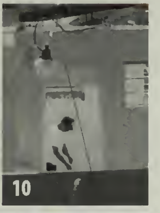

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readers say

rather than simply "proclaim"? Could we "experience God's transforming love in community" rather than simply "practicing believer's baptism"? Maybe the Brazilian party attitude is getting to me, but I really want to serve the Lord in joyfulness and see mission as a celebration of what God is doing among us. *—Steve Plenert, Ceilandia, Brazil*

Right and wrong

The quote "It seems to me you are trying to merge two groups who both think they are right" (Editorial, Sept. 22) piqued me as I reflected on the polity issues related to the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC).

Admitting my MC lenses, I am going to risk suggesting that MC polity at the national level has some virtues. One example: The centralized function of the Mennonite Board of Education serves to promote college boards of overseers who reflect college constituency. GC polity provides pressure to secure overseers who have financial contribution potential.

At the congregational level, the GC local autonomy policy provides conference as a forum where issues are debated and a range of convictions are explored. MC polity tends to provide an opportunity for representatives of one congregation to use the perceived role of conference to meddle in another congregation's agenda.

The sticky quality of our polity issues seems to stem from either/or considerations rather than a search for where each of the polities has worked effectively. If we ascertain where each polity has served its denomination effectively, it will keep us from wasting time on their limitations. With these reflections, I suggest that the Sept. 22 editorial could have been titled, "Two Who Are Right Are Also Both Wrong."*—Raymond Brubaker, St. Albert, Alta.*

Cover photo
by Marilyn Nolt

Welcom the stranger among you

Practicing the love of God requires faithfulness. It is also sometimes illegal.

by Ed Nyce and oscar

During the 1996 Christmas season in Elkhart County, Ind., the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service conducted a raid on several businesses. The INS took into custody 90 undocumented Hispanic residents.

Shackled with leg irons, these men and women were separated and taken to Texas and California to be deported to Mexico. When they didn't return home after work, their family members, friends and babysitters of their children wondered where they were. Only when those who were deported telephoned from Mexico did their loved ones learn of their fate.

In April 1997 provisions of U.S. laws passed the previous September took effect. Things became even more difficult for undocumented people (and for some documented people). In June 1997 another INS raid took place in Elkhart County. Eighty-one people were sent away. In a mid-November raid in Syracuse, Ind., 41 Hispanic people were taken into custody. Twenty-eight were eventually deported.

Many people, for political or other reasons, find it almost impossible legally to acquire documentation to come to the United States. At the same time, the family is hungry and shelter is needed.

In the November raid, at least one young man taken into custody and later released was born and raised in nearby Goshen. He was nabbed because he carried no "papers" to show the INS officials.

Why are there immigrants? People around the world move from one place to another for many reasons. Some simply seek a change. Some want an improved life for their families. Some wish to join other family members.

Stereotypes portray Hispanic immigrants as coming to the United States or Canada out of greed, taking advantage of the system, costing "real" (read "white") Americans or Canadians their jobs.

To be immigrant is to be "emigrant," to be pushed from home with nowhere to go. The push may be from natural disasters, or perhaps land is taken in a time of war. The push may come from less visible forces, such as harmful economic agreements or religious, political or intellectual persecution.

Problems exist in some of the deals struck between governments of poorer countries and corporations from wealthy nations. The deals allow companies to obtain land on which to grow cash crops such as cotton, coffee, bananas and pineapples. Where do they get the land? Often from the poor, who are forcibly removed from home, inheritance and the plot of land that has been their primary form of meager existence for years.

They might seek help from neighbors. But since others in that area are also losing their land, the village may hold few opportunities for sustainable living.

It's often thought that the nearest city might have work, so people head there, only to find that the jobs are already taken.

One day word comes that jobs might be available, but the work is in "Los Estados Unidos," the United States. Many people, for political or other reasons, find it almost impossible legally to acquire documentation to come to the United States. At the same time, the family is hungry and shelter is needed.

The family thinks it over. "Do we want to risk our lives trying to cross the border, to be on the run or at least keep out of the limelight once in the United States, to go to a country where we have to learn another language? Do we want to work nights in a factory for low wages, to be despised by people who don't like our race, to become accustomed to minus 20-degree weather in January? No, we don't want to go there. But what else can we do?"

This is not the reason everyone comes to the United States and Canada. Nor is it the exact story for all who are poor. But it occurs in our world every day. Regardless of the reasons, Daryl Byler notes in Mennonite Central Committee's May-June 1997 *Washington Memo* that 5 million undocumented people live in the United States, while 100 million people (with or without documents) are migrating worldwide.

What can we do? Staying fully within the law,

Can we do our part as a nation to reform the global economic system and its attending legislation, including harmful international debt policies? Can we stop the taking of land by our companies in the first place, which leads to situations of desperate migration?

it is appropriate to talk with our governments about questions such as these: Can we do our part as a nation to reform the global economic system and its attending legislation, including harmful international debt policies? Can we stop the taking of land by our companies in the first place, which leads to situations of desperate migration? If not, what is our nation's responsibility to those whose land has been confiscated? If our governments do not respond, what is the practical responsibility of Christians to reach out to those affected by such policies?

We can see where Scripture might apply. In his article, Daryl Byler reminds us that God loves the stranger (Deuteronomy 10:18), God's people were once strangers (Deuteronomy 10:19), Christ is present in the stranger (Matthew 25:35), some have welcomed strangers who were angels (Hebrews 13:2) and it is only by God's grace that we are not all strangers and aliens (Ephesians 2:11-12). We might review the concerns of Micah 2:1-9. Here doom is promised to those who lie on their beds and plot evil and carry out that evil simply because they have the power to do so. Included is a specific charge about chasing people from their homes and inheritances.

We can rest assured that no one is called to be an expert on every issue. Yet we can pray for each others' ministries. And we can pray for everyone, including undocumented peoples and government officials. We might also reflect on what we can do to help financially, especially when thinking of ministries that receive comparatively little financial assistance.

We can continue to become friends with people we meet, not asking whether they have their papers but becoming close, seeing how much we're all the same and sharing God's love. As we become friends, we can acknowledge that the need is not one-sided but that we, too, are needy people and that we can mutually bless and be blessed in our newfound relationships.

In all of these ways, we are speaking God's peace to one another: sometimes words of comfort, sometimes words of challenge.

oscar is a master of theology student in Christian ethics. Ed Nyce graduated in May from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He lives in Akron, Pa. This article draws from a sermon Ed preached in the summer of 1997.

But is it legal to help immigrants?

It is not always legal to help immigrants, but is the law a sufficient reason to keep us from loving our neighbors? Undocumented people are often termed illegal when breaking immigration laws in the United States or Canada. Yet when people born in the United States or Canada break laws, people name their deeds, not them, as illegal. No person is illegal. Each has been created by God. We need more conversation about why the deeds of some people lead to their being called illegal, while others' illegal and less ethical deeds may be ignored or even lauded by society.

Through history, God's people have acted illegally. Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955. Yet out of that act of refusal, plus the commitment of other Christians, a better legality emerged that is more inclusive of all people.

North American Mennonites who refused to kill during the U.S. Civil War and World War I suffered, but eventually new laws allowed for alternative service to involvement in the military.

Early Anabaptists acted illegally by not baptizing infants. In the early church, Peter and others were arrested for preaching about Jesus Christ (Acts 5). They responded by saying that they "must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29).

In our relationship as Christians with government, we should have no trouble adhering to most laws. We may ask ourselves two questions: (1) Will following a given law prevent me from loving God, from loving my neighbor as myself or from being within God's will? (2) Which law do we obey in those times when the law of the land and God's law or grace conflict?

Meanwhile, even if we act illegally, we are being subject to the government, as called for in Romans 13, because we are willing to accept the consequences of our faithfulness.—*Ed Nyce and oscar*

Marching

A nonviolent walk in Mexico joins peacemakers around the globe.

by Wendy Lehman

A solitary soldier watched from a hill above a crowd, his automatic rifle resting across his knee. Antonio, spokesperson for "Las Abejas" ("The Bees"), encouraged the crowd of over 2,000 Bees and supporters with stories of their shared nonviolent struggle for justice (see box below).

The crowd listened June 25 after walking 2 1/2 hours on a peace pilgrimage in Chiapas, a state in southern Mexico. What began as a journey home ended as a courageous walk for peace. During their march, the Bees regained control over a main artery of the Chiapas highlands, if only for a few hours, as 2,000 people freely walked in a highly militarized zone.

They were accompanied by five Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) members—Liz and Martin Dyrst, Oak Park (Ill.) Mennonite Church; Esther Ho, Haywood, Calif.; Cliff Kindy, North Manchester, Ind., and myself—and other internationals. People worldwide—peace workers, Mennonite pastors, Church of the Brethren volunteers and others—were praying on behalf of the Bees.

Pierre Gingerich, Ithaca, N.Y., who has been with CPT in Chiapas since May 25, said, "The Bees do not see themselves as peace heroes, nonviolent strategists or sophisticated theologians. Nevertheless they ... have grasped the fundamentals of the Exodus and of the Gospels—God wills justice for the oppressed and God wills peace—and have refused to let go even when the wise of this world tell them they're fools."

On June 25, 850 Bees walked toward two of their home communities—Yibeljoj and Los Chorros. These 850 internal refugees are only a small proportion of the 15,000 to 18,000 similarly displaced people in Chiapas.

Many of the Bees in Los Chorros had fled their homes in September 1997, when paramilitary members there told them to pay a fine, join their armed group or be killed. Because the Bees' faith calls them to love their enemies, they refused to pay fines that would probably be used for arms, and they didn't want to join the paramilitary groups in perpetrating violence against their "brothers and sisters."

Why return? On May 30, a seven-person CPT delegation met with Bees living in the refugee camp of X'oyep. Conditions were barely livable in the camps, with little food or potable water, quickly constructed housing with tar paper roofing that didn't protect residents from the rain, plus overcrowded conditions and disease.

Approximately 70,000 Mexican troops are stationed in Chiapas, a state slightly smaller than Mississippi. CPT members saw as many as 12 military vehicles per hour on the main road past X'oyep one day. The presence of the Mexican military and paramilitary groups near the camps makes life even more difficult for refugees. Human rights groups and religious leaders told us the military siphons off Mexican Red Cross water being pumped to X'oyep; similar water theft plagues other camps as well.

The Bees and human rights workers also said soldiers in the Chiapas countryside rape women, occupy schools and harass farmers going to their fields. The U.S. government bears some responsibility in the Chiapas conflict. Human rights groups told us some mili-

Who are the Bees?

Since early 1994, when Zapatista insurgents staged an armed uprising to redress centuries of exploitation, the southern Mexican state of Chiapas has become a war zone. Approximately 70,000 Mexican troops, or roughly one-third of the entire Mexican army, are stationed in the small state of Chiapas (slightly smaller than Mississippi). Eighteen thousand native people have been displaced from their home communities by government-backed militias since 1995. Within this context of violence and fear, indigenous people have formed many nonviolent initiatives to transform the conflict. One group committed to unarmed social change is "Las Abejas" (the Bees).

The Bees are an ecumenical pacifist group inspired by the biblical stories of the Exodus and the unarmed witness of Jesus in the struggle for wholeness and justice. Antonio, a spokesperson, explains their name this way: "[W]e are a multitude and we want to build our house like the honeycomb where we all work collectively ... producing honey for everyone. ... [W]e all march together with our queen, who is the reign of God. We are in the middle of the word of God walking in the way."

The Bees, an indigenous Mayan group with about 4,000 members, formed in 1992, two years before the Zapatista uprising. They held Bible studies across villages and even across denominational lines in a highly polarized religious setting. The Bees are mostly Catholic but include Presbyterians and Baptists, even within the same family. They refer to each other as brothers and sisters.

The Bees live in a context of significant inequality and violence. Indigenous people of Mexico have been denied equal rights for hundreds of years. Native people have often been a source of cheap labor or have been pushed aside by cattle ranchers, oil companies and loggers. The Zapatista uprising came in response to these injustices; this group quickly moved into peace talks with the Mexican government. Ongoing negotiations have been stalled since late August 1996 because of government noncompliance to the peace accords signed by both groups.

Despite the difficult conditions, the Bees resist through their style of community living. They will not accept aid from the government until there is a just peace in Chiapas and the paramilitary members are held responsible for the violence they've committed.

The Bees also practice civil resistance through not paying electrical bills or land taxes. Oscar Salinas, a vicar in the San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Diocese, spoke at the Dec. 28, 1997, homily for the 45 Acteal victims (see page 7). "A group like this," he said, "armed only with love and truth, is the most dangerous and threatening to defenders of the system because it most effectively unmasks their injustices."—*Wendy Lehman*

n the reign of God

CPT

tary aid and weaponry the United States sends to Mexico to fight the drug war ends up being used against innocent civilians.

Massacre: The town of Acteal is just 20 minutes by vehicle up the road from X'oyep. Five CPT members lived there June 6-10. Paramilitary members of the ruling party, many from Los Chorros, massacred 45 Bees in Acteal on Dec. 22, 1997. Members of the Bees told CPT workers that during this massacre they ran to get help from Mexican public security officers just up the road. But the public security police told them it wasn't their job to intervene.

At least 60—some reports say 200—armed men shot to death the 45 Bees as they knelt and prayed. Partly because of this image of the massacre and the refusal to use violence even in defense, the Bees have occasionally faced criticism for being too passive. One international volunteer told CPTers she feared that if attacked again, the Bees would simply kneel and pray. They are religious people and often pray and sing. They held Mass every afternoon while the CPT group was in Acteal.

They are not passive and get their strength from their belief. On June 6, one Bee in Acteal said, "If God gives us life, we will return." Their decision came partly because of the terrible conditions in the camps, and, as one said, "The government has not helped or protected us. Therefore, we must take the initiative to return to our homes and our inheritance."

International support of prayer and letters: Prior to the Bees' attempt to return, CPT, in collaboration with them, issued an urgent action alert calling on people worldwide to support the Bees' return by writing letters to government officials, fasting and praying. Pastors, lay people, volunteers and people from many different groups wrote to express their support.

Members of Peace Mennonite Church in Dallas, Texas, prayed and fasted on June 25. The church building was open that day for people to pray, watch a video on the Bees and write letters.

CPT headquarters in Chicago organized a prayer vigil at the Mexican consulate on June 25. People delivered roses, candles and a letter expressing their concern to the assistant consul general.

The outcome: Hours before their return, the Bees received news of threats against them by the armed group in Los Chorros. Contrary to their original plans, the Bees gathered from X'oyep, Acteal and other villages to walk hilly rural roads going only halfway to their homes. Despite the aborted return, it was a festive event. Women and men walked in three lines stretching perhaps half a mile. Hundreds of children led the way, singing. Periodically the entire group waved their white peace flags together. A truck full of musicians sang to an accordion and a guitar. Dozens of journalists, priests and international supporters, including CPTers, went with them.

Despite the heavy presence of the military in this region, the Bees took back a strip of the countryside near Acteal and X'oyep. Probably due to the international and large press presence the Bees generated, CPT members saw only three military vehicles driven on the road, and the soldiers were on their best behavior. At the press conference following their peace pilgrimage, the Bees said again and again, "We will continue to resist."

Although the 850 Bees did not return home June 25, they presented a strong voice for justice through their peace pilgrimage. The Bees shared their frustrations and indignation toward the paramilitary groups and the Mexican government, yet they continued in their practice of nonviolent struggle. As one spokesperson said, "God does not teach us to kill each other."

Because the Bees' faith calls them to love their enemies, they refused to pay fines that would probably be used for arms, and they didn't want to join the paramilitary groups in perpetrating violence against their "brothers and sisters."

Wendy Lehman, Kidron, Ohio, was a full-time volunteer with Christian Peacemaker Teams beginning in January 1995. She spent much of 1995-96 with CPT in Hebron, West Bank, and has been to Chiapas three times since August 1997. She became a CPT reservist in July and is now a graduate student in international peace studies at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind.

Health care changes prompt Mennonite agencies and congregations to leave hospital business

> It's fair to say Mennonites are almost out of the business.
>
> —*Larry Nikkel*

Mennonite witness: To your health

Health care historically has been a prominent form of Mennonite Christian witness. Church-affiliated hospitals were operated in a number of communities, particularly west of the Mississippi River. Among them: Beatrice, Neb.; Calico Rock, Ark.; Goessel, Kan.; Greensburg, Kan.; Hillsboro, Kan.; La Jara, Colo.; La Junta, Colo.; Lebanon, Ore.; Mountain Lake, Minn.; Newton, Kan.; Rocky Ford, Colo.; Salem, Ore.; Ulysses, Kan.; and Walsenburg, Colo.

Mennonites are still involved in health care, just not acute-care hospitals. For example, Mennonite Health Services counts among its members 39 retirement centers and nursing homes and 10 mental health facilities.

Arkansas Valley Regional Medical Center is an atypical example of the biblical injunction that the first shall be last.

The La Junta, Colo., hospital was Mennonite Board of Missions' first venture into health care as a service opportunity. But hospital ownership was transferred to a community-based corporation in June, ending MBM's involvement in the health-care industry and highlighting the decreasing presence of Mennonite hospitals.

"It's just been a matter of change in the whole practice of health care in our society," says Ken Schmidt, a staff member in MBM's now-defunct Health and Welfare Committee, which oversaw the organization's hospital work.

During the 20th century, Mennonites had owned and/or operated some dozen or more hospitals around the country. But with the change in ownership of the La Junta hospital, there are no hospitals affiliated with Mennonite agencies and only a smattering with congregational ties.

"It's fair to say Mennonites are almost out of the business," says Larry Nikkel, president of Mennonite Health Services (MHS), an inter-Mennonite organization of health facilities.

Mennonite hospitals started appearing around the turn of the century to improve Mennonite communities and to provide service opportunities, particularly for deaconesses. Some of the first Mennonite hospitals were established in Goessel, Kan., in 1899, Mountain Lake, Minn., in 1905 and Newton, Kan., in 1908. MBM started a sanitorium for tuberculosis patients in La Junta in 1906 and took over the city hospital in 1920.

Thus started an era of good health for Mennonite hospitals that would last into the 1970s and '80s. Then, says former hospital administrator Bill Zuercher, "the noose began to tighten."

The federal government had offered financial support to develop rural hospitals in the 1950s and '60s. Some 20 years later, however, the government started cutting back on Medicare reimbursements. Insurance practices changed. The length of hospital stays dropped —as did hospital revenue.

"When I was a kid and you had a hernia operation, you were in the hospital for two weeks," says Marvin Ewert, former administrator of Bethel Deaconess Hospital in Newton. "Now it's an out-patient thing."

Bethel, affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church, in 1988 merged with the other hospital in the city, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to form Newton Medical Center. Ewert, Bethel's administrator from 1967 through the merger, noted that the two hospitals combined had a capacity of about 150 beds. The merged operation has 60.

At the same time income went down, expenses such as new technology and malpractice insurance went up. "It became increasingly difficult for the smaller, free-standing hospitals to survive," Zuercher says.

He was the first executive director of Mennonite Health Resources, created in 1981 when MBM spun off seven, mostly rural hospitals in western Kansas, Colorado and Oregon. Today MHR's only institution is a retirement home in Coldwater, Kan. The hospitals have closed, become community-based operations or joined other operations, says Schmidt, MHR secretary.

Similar stories are repeated elsewhere. Ewert says before the creation of Newton Medical Center, neither hospital was large enough to afford to specialize. For example, they did not have a CAT scanner or a certified nursery for at-risk newborns.

The former deaconess hospital in Beatrice, Neb., owned by the two local Mennonite congregations, became a community hospital in 1976. Mennonite Health Services, created in the late 1980s to assume most of the rest of the MBM health-care facilities, operated a locally owned hospital at Lebanon, Ore., until last year, when it consolidated with an Episcopal hospital. MHS, which has 59 health-care facilities, including retirement, developmental disability and mental health, now manages only one hospital—at Henderson, Neb.

BroMenn Healthcare in Bloomington, Ill., is one of the few remaining hospitals with direct church links. Among the 103 Protestant congregations which own the facility are 24 General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Evangelical Mennonite Church congregations. BroMenn was formed in 1984 by the merger of Mennonite Hospital in Bloomington, started in 1919, and Brokaw Hospital in nearby Normal. There is also a local Catholic hospital.—*Rich Preheim*

Mennonite Men

Date, 1998

History of Mennonite Men

Mennonite Men, the official men's organization of the General Conference Mennonite Church, began in 1950. It grew out of the desire for service opportunities by people who experienced Civilian Public Service during World War II and the overseas relief work directed by Mennonite Central Committee that followed. Mennonite Men provided opportunities for men with gifts who wanted to serve the church. After a strong beginning in the 1950s, Mennonite Men was fairly inactive in the 1960s and 1970s. From its beginning, Mennonite Men has sponsored a men's banquet at General Conference Mennonite Church sessions. In 1983, the 10th Man church building program brought a resurgence; 10th Man is now Mennonite Men's major project. Over $600,000 U.S. in grants has been given to 24 congregations in the United States and Canada to help build meetinghouses. Mennonite Men also helps resource men's groups in local congregations, promotes men's resources written or presented by Mennonites, and helps develop materials on specific men's issues.

10th MAN
Church Building Program

Grants Approved for Two Contrasting Congregations

Mennonite Men officers and representatives approved two 10th Man church building grants for 1998-99. Grants were awarded to River of Life Fellowship, Sweet Home, Ore., and Christ Community Church, Schaumburg, Ill.

Your help is needed to build churches. To participate, complete the form on page 4.

River of Life serves in logging community

Sweet Home, a community that grew around the timber industry, is nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains at the eastern edge of the Willamette Valley in Oregon. The town of 7,500, largely blue-collar workers, has a rugged beauty. In this setting River of Life, "continues to grow with new believers coming to faith and others recommitting themselves to Christ," says Gary Hooley, pastor. "We have many visitors as these new believers invite their family and friends." At the fourth church camp out on August 30, 13 people ranging in age from 9 to 73 were baptized in the South Santiam River.

Gary's wife, Miriam, relates the story of Kim, a logger who Gary led to the Lord several years ago, and Kim's wife, Debbie, who have been attending about 2 1/2 years. "During that time, Kim's two sisters have

Baptism in the South Santiam River, Sweet Home, Ore.

returned to the Lord and attend. One of their husbands has accepted Christ and now attends. Two of Debbie's aunts are attending. Debbie's mother and nephew and his wife attend occasionally. Recently Kim's parents began attending and committed their lives to Christ." Miriam says, "At our home group meeting a few weeks ago Kim said, 'I wish I weren't so afraid to share my faith.' We howled! He and his wife single-handedly filled three benches at River of Life!"

"About 210 people call River of Life home; this includes approximately 50 children," says Hooley. "The current membership is 85, average attendance is about 160 to 175." This is in contrast to 25 who related to the church in 1992.

Hooley says, "We continue to see our vision realized: providing a community of love and acceptance where people can find faith and healing in the person of Jesus Christ. The blessing of the 10th Man grant money will enable us to focus more on people needs."

Mennonite Men plans to award a grant of $30,000 to River of Life Fellowship when funds are available.

River of Life Meetinghouse, Sweet Home, Ore.

Schaumburg provides an urban multicultural ministry

Schaumburg, Ill., a racially, economically, and culturally diverse community, located 10 miles west of Chicago's O-Hare Airport, is a center for industry and commerce. It is in this setting that Christ Community Mennonite Church has been forming and developing for 10 years. Church planters LeRoy and Pauline Kennel state, "We believed from the beginning that a Mennonite church in this community should reflect the diversity of the area, and have succeeded in drawing a multiracial, multicultural congregation of Hispanics, Asians, blacks, and whites."

"We have about 100 members with average attendance of about 50, including children," says Kennel. "Of the 100 members, 14

Pauline and LeRoy Kennel, church planters, and church council.

grew up in Mennonite Homes and 10 had some prior Mennonite experience."

Five years ago the church purchased property with a house that provides space for parsonage, church office, the church's counseling center, a small store featuring Ten Thousand Villages items, and room for a Presbyterian church's office.

"The congregation has become known as a church that cares," says Kennel. " God seems to keep inviting us to help meet the many needs of people here. The congregation has written a mission statement and assessed how a building project would make it possible to do much more. That is why on Sept. 27, 1998, the church expressed a strong yes vote for church-owned worship facilities.

Mennonite Men has approved a grant of $50,000 for Christ Community Church to build a meetinghouse on their property.

Linda Trost, Valeska Nieves-Yoder, and Avinash Kessop share during potluck.

Future Projections For Mennonite Men

Purpose: Mennonite Men is an organization of the General Conference Mennonite Church that aims to provide an Anabaptist perspective on manhood that speaks to current issues. Its goals are to promote Christian growth, provide service opportunities, church missions and education among the men of the church. Local Mennonite men's groups exist or emerge for service projects, Bible study, prayer, mutual support and study of Christian male identity.

A priority for Mennonite Men is to provide church building grants to newer congregations through its 10th Man church building program. Several hundred donors give an average of $200 per year for this work. The 10th Man approach has encouraged hundreds of men to volunteer their skills and time helping to construct new meetinghouses. "The Riverton, Man., experience," suggests Walter Franz, executive secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada Ministries Commission, "illustrated the tremendous value of volunteers in terms of the physical, emotional and spiritual support given to their project."

Conference of Mennonites in Canada: Six congregations in Canada have received or been approved for 10th Man grants. In September, five representatives from Mennonite Men traveled to Riverton, Man. Fellowship Circle, to deliver their 10th Man grant. The church is located in an economically-depressed community made up mostly of people of aboriginal descent. "Tears of gratitude flowed down the cheeks of members of the Riverton Fellowship Circle when they learned that Mennonite Men had approved a $30,000 (Cdn) grant to assist them in building their first church building," says Franz. "'Someone believes in us' was another response. The grant made the difference in going ahead or delaying the process for an indefinite period of time."

10th Man activities in Canada are coordinated by the Ministries Commission of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC). "We wish to continue to be a part of this creative program that assists congregations, on either side of the 49th parallel, who need help in obtaining a church building," says Franz. He notes that, "We participate in forming

Grant presented to Riverton Fellowship Circle. Neil Von Gunten, Barbara Daniels, Walter Franz, Carl Thieszen.

the policies that guide the program, in promotion and fundraising activities, and recommending and approving the actual projects."

CMC will assume responsibility for how networking and recruiting take place in Canada and for how donors to this program will be kept informed of projects and activities. Franz points out, "This laity-driven program has a lot of potential for supporting the life and ministries of our church family."

Mennonite Church: The Mennonite Church does not have an equivalent to General Conference Mennonite Men, but there are congregations and area conferences with active men's groups. "Of the 24 10th Man grants given during the past 13 years, 70 percent have helped fund the initiatives of integrated or dually affiliated congregations," says J. Ron Byler, Associate General Secretary, Mennonite Church General Board. "One unique contribution the General Conference will bring to our integrated church life is Mennonite Men. Through Mennonite Men, congregations are invited to form men's groups that encourage men to grow in faith and service. Through the 10th Man program, Mennonite Men is helping new congregations buy or build church facilities. Mennonite Men appears poised to lead the new church in working with men and men's issues," says Byler.

Coordinator Update

- The need of new churches building their first meetinghouse far exceeds the grants available. More and more churches will need assistance in order to enhance their ministry with the building or purchasing of a meetinghouse.
- Men or women wishing to become part of 10th Man are invited to donate $100 twice a year to enable new congregations to secure a meetinghouse.
- Covenant Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man., has been approved for a grant of $16,400 (Cdn) to purchase their first meetinghouse. This will be funded in 2000.
- For more information about Mennonite Men, visit our web site or contact the Newton office (See details on this page.)

—Jim Gingerich

Mennonite Men Banquet Planned For St. Louis

Plan to attend the Mennonite Men banquet at the *St. Louis 99 Convention,* July 23-27, 1999. All men attending conference are welcome. You can sign up as part of your registration. You will learn more about Mennonite Men and its programs.

Jim Gingerich, editor
Mennonite Men insert in ***The Mennonite***
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Yes, I would like to help new Mennonite churches!

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Phone __________________ Home congregation ____________________

Return this form to: Tenth Man, c/o Carl Thieszen, P.O. Box 61, North Newton, KS 67117 or Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

EMM photo by Andre Provost

Thai river, living water

As another believer lends support, Pa Yai Muang (left) baptizes Pa Yai Num, one of 14 people from the Thai village of Pong Duan to be baptized this summer. Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Andre and Karen Provost and Skip and Carol Tobin work with Muang in discipling the new Christians in the village. Num and his wife, Pii Daeng, who led him to Christ, have set a goal of converting half the citizens of Pong Duan.

Correction: A discussion group at the Kansas City integration consultation suggested that congregations with concerns about denominational membership—not disciplined congregations, as reported in the Oct. 20 *The Mennonite* —give the new church a try for three years.

From Nicaragua to Canada, calls issued to assist in wake of Mitch's devastation

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras—Mark and Lynn Baker, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) workers in Tegucigalpa, on Oct. 31 were preparing to transport clothing to the Honduran coast for victims of Hurricane Mitch. Then the Bakers discovered that a number of neighborhood families had lost their homes in landslides caused by the continuous hurricane rains and were staying in a public school up the street.

"That is the reality for everyone in Honduras," says Lynn Baker. "We are distressed to hear about catastrophes in other parts of the country, but no one needs to go very far to find someone in dire need, having either lost home or business. This has left most everyone feeling numb and overwhelmed."

Mitch, the fourth strongest Atlantic hurricane this century, hit Honduras with particular fury, killing more than 7,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands more homeless. Ten thousand people have been killed throughout Central America, and 13,000 remain missing.

There are no known hurricane-related fatalities among Central American Mennonite families. But two Honduran Mennonite Church meeting places were destroyed, according to church president Jose Angel Ochoa.

As Central Americans and expatriate workers in the regions scramble to meet the staggering needs, U.S. and Canadian Mennonites are being urged to lend their support to relief efforts.

Mennonite Central Committee is soliciting $300,000 to respond to requests for immediate and longer-term assistance from Central American partners. MCC is also asking constituents to prepare 10,000 hurricane relief kits (see sidebar at right). EMM, the mission agency of Lancaster Conference, is encouraging every conference congregation to collect a Thanksgiving offering any Sunday in November for relief.

MCC has purchased 60 tons of rice, beans and corn in Belize for shipment to Honduras. A ship left Houston Nov. 11, bound for the country with 22 tons of MCC canned meat, blankets, soap and food.

In Nicaragua, two Mennonite Economic Development Associates-supported projects were hit hard by Mitch. Many participants in a marketing-assistance program for pottery makers lost their ovens, workshops, equipment and materials, says Octavio Cortes, who directs MEDA operations in Nicaragua.

"They will be unable to get raw material to replace lost inventory due to washed-out roads," he says. "As well, there's the loss of markets."

As many as 100 clients of a MEDA-supported microloan program lost everything, including customers, Cortes says. As a result, at least $150,000 in loans may have to be written off.

"Relief aid is always welcomed," Cortes says. "It will be at least three months before [people] can begin once again to make their living."—*EMM, MCC and MEDA news services*

Hurricane relief kits

- Two wide-tooth combs
- Six adult-size toothbrushes (leave in package)
- Two family-size tubes of toothpaste
- One package of 24 sanitary napkins (thin maxi-pads)
- One bottle acetaminophen, i.e., Tylenol (min. 100 tablets)
- One bottle cough syrup with expectorant
- Two lightweight bath towels
- Four bars of anti-bacterial soap
- One large tube of antifungal cream, i.e., Tinactin or Lotrimin
- Envelope with $10 check for shipping costs and Spanish-language Bible

Pack in five-gallon plastic pail with lid and take to nearest Mennonite Central Committee office.

Parental leave policy strengthened in new recommended pastoral guidelines

NEWTON, Kan.—Adding a new member to the family should get pastors nearly three months of parental leave, according to new General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) guidelines for pastors' salaries and benefits.

The 1998-99 guidelines, issued this summer, include the recommendation that pastors who have been employed at least half-time for a minimum of one year be granted "an unpaid, job-protected leave of up to 12 weeks" for reasons including "care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care." The guidelines also state that a congregation and pastor may agree on a paid leave for a portion of the 12 weeks based on accumulated health leave and/or vacation time.

The guidelines previously stated that congregations "should provide" for maternity/paternity leave without offering specific suggestions. The updated guidelines follow the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

No congregation is required to follow the guidelines, but the GC and MC ministerial leadership offices make them available as a reference.

The "Guidelines for Pastors Salaries/Benefits in the U.S." includes recommendations for salary, pension, vacation, housing allowance, sabbatical, health care, continuing education and other benefits.—*GCMC and MBCM news services*

Racer steps off support for MCC

At a pace of $100 per mile, Ruth Kauffman turned a 26.2-mile walk into a marathon fund-raiser for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Kauffman, a member of Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church, earned $2,663 for MCC when she walked the Portland Marathon last month. She finished in six hours and 56 minutes.

This was the third consecutive year Kauffman completed the marathon but the first time she used the event as a fund-raiser. Support came from her congregation as well as from friends and family from as far away as Virginia.

"It was worth it, even with a toe infection," Kauffman says. "Having a goal made it more enjoyable too. ... It was something to accomplish for MCC."
—Matthew K. Smith

Symposium to honor MCC, college leader

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—World War II pushed Robert Kreider into church leadership. And he has kept on leading.

Kreider, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker and board member, college teacher and administrator, historian and author, will be honored with a symposium, "Walls and Windows: Creating and Nurturing Viable Community," to be held Nov. 19-21 at Bethel College, North Newton.

"Dr. Kreider is a renaissance man," says Shirley King, chair of the symposium steering committee and Bethel's dean of enrollment management. "It seemed important to us to put together a program that reflected Dr. Kreider's vast interests and wealth of experiences."

As a Civilian Public Service worker during World War II, Kreider became an administrator of MCC's mental hospital program. He then helped direct relief operations in Germany after the war. Kreider served Bluffton (Ohio) College as history professor, academic dean and president and also held several positions at Bethel. He and his wife, Lois, live in North Newton.

Symposium speakers will include Rachel Waltner Goossen, Goshen (Ind.) College history professor, who has co-authored a book with Kreider; film producer John Ruth; fighter pilot turned pacifist David Kliewer; and former MCC executive secretary John A. Lapp. Goshen president Shirley Showalter will give the keynote address.

MBM photo by Del Hershberger

By Georges

Enrique Ortiz, maintenance director at Academia Menonita Betania, a Mennonite elementary and high school in Aibonito, Puerto Rico, sweeps the day's rainwater from the second floor of the school. When Hurricane Georges struck Sept. 21, it ripped off two-thirds of the building's roof. Ortiz must remove rainwater each day to keep it from dripping down to the first floor, where classes continue.

Oldest Mennonite church in Paris turns 40

PARIS—More than 200 people turned out Oct. 4 for a day of festivities celebrating the 40th anniversary of Eglise Evangelique Mennonite, the oldest and largest Mennonite congregation in Paris.

Located in the suburb of Chatenay, the congregation grew out of a ministry among adults with mental and physical disabilities. Eglise Evangelique Mennonite, now with 60 members, was founded on Oct. 1, 1958. Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) purchased the meetinghouse for the fledgling congregation.

France is home to 27 Mennonite congregations, with a membership of about 2,000. Anabaptist presence in the country's eastern Alsace region dates back to the 17th century. *—MBM News Service*

Group exploring dropping Mennonite name

FORT WAYNE, Ind.—The Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC) is considering deleting "Mennonite" from its name because, say pastors and church planters, it is confusing and impedes church growth.

"The word communicates a perception with the unchurched that is not accurate, one that says we are very close to the Amish, strictly pacifist, farmers, uneducated," says Tom Bernardo, an EMC church planter in Hillard, Ohio.

The 4,000-member denomination was born out of an Amish split in 1865. The current name was adopted in 1949. Only about half the 30 EMC congregations—located in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Kansas—have the word "Mennonite" in their name.*—Mennonite Weekly Review*

Urban Leaders Network holds first meeting

ST. LOUIS—A clear call for continued development of an Anabaptist theology for doing missions in city settings emerged from the first meeting of a Mennonite urban workers organization held Oct. 28-Nov. 1 in St. Louis.

"We need to develop an Anabaptist theology that is not based in [traditional Mennonite] ethnicity," said Graham Cyster of Lancaster, Pa., associate director of home ministries for Eastern Mennonite Missions. "The only growth now in Lancaster County is among church plants. ... [But] there is a pervasive fear in Lancaster County that ethnicity will get lost in church plants."

Mennonite Board of Missions sponsored the meeting of the new Mennonite Urban Leaders Network as a forum for Mennonites involved in urban ministry. About 40 people attended.*—MBM News Service*

MB members among victims of Congo fighting

HILLSBORO, Kan.—Members of the Congolese Mennonite Brethren (MB) conference are among the casualties of fighting since late summer between rebel forces and the government army in the capital city of Kinshasa.

Six MB members have been reported killed, nine missing and 19 wounded. Twenty-eight church members' homes have been looted, and 17 homes have been hit by mortar shells. Kinshasa is home to about 40 MB congregations with some 8,300 members.

Nationalism is growing among MB members in Congo, says Pakisa Tshimika, Africa secretary for MBMS International, the North American MB mission agency. "The people are saying it's time to defend our country from foreign invasion," he says.*—Christian Leader*

Eastern Mennonite Seminary dean to step down

HARRISONBURG, Va.—After 22 years as dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, George Brunk III will leave the position on June 30, 1999. He will spend the 1999-2000 academic year on sabbatical, then plans to return to EMS to teach New Testament.

"The seminary needs fresh ideas and energy for the start of a new millennium," Brunk says, "and I desire more time for teaching, research and writing before completing my career."

by the way ...

Former major league baseball pitcher Dan Quisenberry, who died Sept. 29 of brain cancer at age 45, briefly attended Mennonite Brethren-affiliated Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University and was a member of Mennonite Economic Development Associates.*—Mennonite Weekly Review*

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Births

Alberson, Morgan Claire, Aug. 30, to Jeromy and Kimberly (Lehman) Alberson, Berne, Ind.

Anders, Dawson Tate, Oct. 23, to David and Elizabeth (Longacre) Anders, Telford, Pa.

Bostjancic, Sydney Marie, Oct. 13, to Deb (Slater) and Jim Bostjancic, Macedonia, Ohio.

Danekas, Zachary Donald, Oct. 6, to Amy (Schweitzer) and Don Danekas Jr., Milford, Neb.

Fisher, Tiffany Eve, Oct. 17, to Cindy and Ralph Fisher, Wellman, Iowa.

Gwillim, Bret Thomas, Oct. 15, to Mark and Nicole (Neuschwander) Gwillim, Corvallis, Ore.

Hartman-Souder, Valerie Joy, Oct. 22, to Brenda and Mark Hartman-Souder, Jos, Nigeria.

Jacobs, Brandon, Sept. 25, to Brenda and Stanley Jacobs, New Waterford, Ohio.

Kauffman, Isaac Riehl, Oct. 7, to Jason and Robin (Neff) Kauffman, West Liberty, Ohio.

Kennell, Emily Faith, Aug. 30, to Jeff and Laurel (Trexler) Kennell, Wenona, Ill.

Lauber, Jaron David, Oct. 23, to Lonnie and Michele (Sterling) Lauber, Tofield, Alta.

Mark, John Albert, Sept. 8, to Scott and Summer (Quimby) Mark, Elkhart, Ind.

Miller, Victor Frank, Oct. 18, to Kim (Moore) and Sean Miller, Washington, Iowa.

Mishler, TerriAnna Jean, Sept. 15, to Glenda (Mullet) and Shane Mishler, Topeka, Ind.

Pawlak, Samuel Arthur, Oct. 6, to Billie Jo (Robinson) and Jeff Pawlak, Elkhart, Ind.

Roth, Jackson David, Oct. 10, to Maria (Freyenberger) and Mike Roth, Wayland, Iowa.

Sandry, Isaiah Thomas, Sept. 2, to Carla (Ekstrom) and Eugene Sandry, Wheatland, N.D.

Shenk, Addison Kendall, Oct. 29, to Duane and Tanya (Charles) Shenk, Harrisonburg, Va.

Shirk, Nichole Renee, Oct. 22, to Phil and Renee (Shellenberger) Shirk, Mount Joy, Pa.

Sprunger, Lance James, Aug. 25, to Carolyn (Cable) and James Sprunger, Goshen, Ind.

Strubhar, Marc-Andrew Glenn, Oct. 23, to Andrew and Lisa (Gundy) Strubhar, Washington, Ill.

Stutzman, Benjamin Robert, Oct. 6, to Ann Martin and Jim Stutzman, Lancaster, Pa.

Tribble, Caleb Andrew, Oct. 2, to Christine (Dawson) and Michael Tribble, Berne, Ind.

Trissel, Illeana Nicole, Sept. 30, to Christen (Sauder) and Jason Trissel, Indianapolis.

Troyer, Jared Dayton, Sept. 11, to Brenda (Miller) and Don Troyer, Hartville, Ohio.

Wampole, Seth Christopher, Oct. 19, to Cheri (Gingerich) and Christopher Wampole, Downingtown, Pa.

Zehr, Noah Robert Branche, Oct. 11, to Jared and Shellie Zehr, Croghan, N.Y.

Marriages

Brullo/Leaman: Robert William Brullo, Bowmansville, Pa., and Michelle Lynn Leaman, Terre Hill, Pa., Oct. 24 at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa.

Burkholder/Kenyon: Kent Burkholder, Albany, Ore., and Heidi Kenyon, Lebanon, Ore., Oct. 17.

Chunn/Ediger: Joseph Chunn, Hutchinson, Kan., and Leigh Ediger, Hutchinson, Oct. 3 at Hebron Mennonite Church, Buhler, Kan.

Derstine/Stutzman: Merrill Derstine, Telford, Pa., and Elaine Stutzman, Souderton, Pa., Oct. 25.

Devnich/Oswald: Tim Devnich, Peoria, Ariz., and Cheri Oswald, Peoria, Oct. 25 at Phoenix.

DiBlasio/Sortino: Anthony DiBlasio, Staten Island, N.Y., and Denise Sortino, Staten Island, Oct. 25 at Redeeming Grace Fellowship, Staten Island.

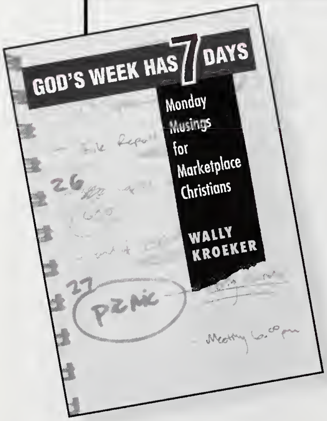
Ebert/Emrey: Amy Ebert, Lancaster, Pa., and Eric Emrey, East Earl, Pa., Oct. 24 at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Friesen/Leichty: Amy Friesen, Archbold, Ohio, and Ed Leichty, Wayland, Iowa, Oct. 24.

Fultz/Smith: Shawn Fultz, Belleville, Pa., and Shannon Smith, Belleville, Sept. 19 at Allensville Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Good/Kenney: Juanita Good, Lititz, Pa., and John Kenney, Staunton, Va., Oct. 10 at Orange, Va.

Hardy/Miller: Chris Hardy, Pryor, Okla., and Sheila Miller, Chouteau, Okla., Nov. 7 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, Okla.



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—*Dan Quisenberry, Poet, Former Major League Baseball Pitcher*

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Kaufman/Krabill: Austin Kaufman, Millersburg, Ohio, and Kari Krabill, Massillon, Ohio, Oct. 17 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.
Leu/Short: Helen Stuckey Leu, West Unity, Ohio, and Theron Short, Archbold, Ohio, Oct. 10 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.
Lynn/Nussbaum: Bob Lynn, Calico Rock, Ark., and Freida Nussbaum, Calico Rock, Oct. 24 at Calico Rock Mennonite Fellowship.
Martin/Rosner: Carmela Martin, Indianapolis, and Kevin Rosner, Indianapolis, Oct. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Deaths

Alt, Marie Biberstein, 88, Berne, Ind., died Oct. 7. Spouse: Orval Alt (deceased). Parents: Adam and Emma Biberstein (deceased). Survivors: children Merlin, Lavera Gillete, Alice Grimme, Berdella Liechty; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 10 at First Mennonite Church, Berne.
Beckler, Ruth Krabill, 71, Albany, Ore., died Oct. 25 of cancer. Spouse: Clyde Beckler (deceased). Parents: Robert and Amanda Wyse Krabill (deceased). Survivors: children Dennis, Craig, Karen Thornton, Kendra Weiss; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Fairview Mennonite Church, Albany.
Caho, George Richard, 70, Inola, Okla., died Sept. 14 of cancer. Spouse; Marion Stegbauer Caho. Parents: George and Ruby Mauzy Caho (deceased). Other survivors: son Dan; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 18 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.
Esh, Lucetta Yoder, 88, West Liberty, Ohio, died Oct. 12. Spouse: Harold Esh (deceased). Parents: John and Emma Belle Hartzler Yoder (deceased). Survivors: children Paul, Lydia King, Joanne Histand, Ruth, Jeannie Nafziger, Effie Sullenberger; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.
Fretz, Lyall David, 86, Vineland, Ont., died Oct. 2. Spouse: Anna Mae Charles Fretz. Parents: David and Clara Hoover Fretz (deceased). Funeral: Oct. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Vineland.
Hess, Ivan, 81, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, died Sept. 15 of heart failure. Spouse: Elizabeth Hess. Parents: John and Annie Hess (deceased). Other survivors: children Rachel Litwiller, Beulah Hess-Yoder; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 19 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.
Hofer, Elizabeth Hofer, 95, Bridgewater, S.D., died Oct. 27. Survivors: children Joe Jr., Emma, Samuel; 10 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 31 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.
Jantz, Clyde, 86, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 22 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Anna Jantz. Parents: John and Elizabeth Wadel Jantz (deceased). Other survivors: children Carolyn Clydene Gingerich, Lou Ann Eichelberger, Darrel; six grandchildren; eight stepgrandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; three stepgreat-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Hesston Mennonite Church.
King, Edward, 48, Creigertown, Pa., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Diane King. Parents: Delores (deceased) and Edward King Sr. Other survivors: children Kimberly Kulp, Shauna, Tiffany, Tamara, Aubrey, Edward Kuterbach; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Elverson, Pa.
Lehman, Helen, 86, Lowville, N.Y., died Oct. 14. Spouse: Ezra Lehman (deceased). Survivors: children Richard Hills, Ronald Hills, Beverly Kiernan; stepchildren Donald Lehman, Kermit Lehman, Pauline Lyndaker, Charlotte Clifton, Roselba Combs; 35 grandchildren; 70 great-grandchildren; 14 great-great grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y.
Morningstar, Titus Lee, 90, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 24 of cancer. Spouse: Charlotte Miller Morningstar. Parents: Lewis and Fannie Kauffman Morningstar (deceased). Funeral: Sept. 27.
Peachey, Richard, 67, Belleville, Pa., died Oct. 11. Spouse: Eva Peachey. Parents: Oliver and Bernice Peachey (deceased). Other survivors: children Kathy DeVore, Becky; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 14 at Maple Grove Mennonite, Belleville.
Plett, Eldon, 72, Buhler, Kan., died Oct. 14. Spouse: Verdena Franz Plett (deceased). Survivor: daughter Sharon Becker. Funeral: Oct. 18.
Schrock, Berneice, 88, Burr Oak. Mich., died Oct. 13 of a stroke. Spouse: Ora Schrock (deceased). Survivors: children Lloyd, Bob, Phyllis Hooley, Martha Wickey; 10 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak.
Yoder, Thomas, 77, Belleville, Pa., died Sept. 15 of cancer. Spouse: Elsie Yoder. Parents: Joseph and Nannie Yoder (deceased). Other survivors: children Nancy Glick, Jay; two grandchildren. Funeral at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

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- **Light House**, a voc rehab facility in eastern Lancaster County, Pa., is seeking an individual to help ***manage and supervise food packaging*** department. Competitive wages and benefits. Contact Frank King, LHRC, 3431 Division Hwy., New Holland, PA 17557; 717-354-0355.

- **Beaver Camp**, Lowville, N.Y., has a ***caretaker*** position available. This is a VS position for a one- or two-year term. Responsibilities include cooking, housekeeping and some maintenance. Preference given for a couple, but a single will be considered. Housing, food and health insurance supplied. Please contact Emanuel Gingerich at 315-376-2640.

- **Spruce Lake Retreat** seeks ***executive director*** to provide leadership in camping ministries, vision and development. Appropriate education and experience required. Spruce Lake Retreat is a year-round facility of Franconia Mennonite Camping Association, located in northeastern Pennsylvania. Information about our facilities and program is available at www.sprucelake.org.

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- **Garden Valley Retirement Village** is currently seeking a full-time ***chaplain*** for our 175-unit retirement community. Ideal candidates would be integral team players, providing evangelically Christian spiritual, personal guidance for residents, family members, staff. Req: previous experience in pastoral role, high comfort level working with older adults. Responsibilities include development, coordination of regular religious services such as vespers, Bible studies, prayer meetings, etc.

  Please submit resume and introduction letter to Larry Burmingham, Garden Valley Retirement Village, 1505 E. Spruce, Garden City, KS 67846; fax 316-275-6582.

- **Goshen College**, a four-year liberal arts institution, is accepting applications from candidates for a full-time, tenure-track position in ***world history***, with particular focus on African, Middle Eastern or Asian history. Ph.D. completed prior to August 1999 is required. Review of applications will begin Jan. 5, 1999, and will continue until the position is filled.

  To apply, send curriculum vitae and letter to Paul A. Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email dean@goshen.edu. We encourage applications through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

- **From Age to Age: *Historians and the Modern Church***, a festschrift honoring historian Donald F. Durnbaugh. Includes essays by Jeff Bach, Dale W. Brown, Robert Clouse, David Eller, Franklin Littell, William Kostlevy, Donald E. Miller, Murray Wagner, Hans Schneider, Dennis Slabaugh, Dale Stoffer and John Howard Yoder, originally read at a conference at Bridgewater College in October 1997.

  Send check or money order for $18 plus $3 postage and handling to Brethren Life and Thought, c/o Bethany Theological Seminary, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374; or Forum for Religious Studies, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812.

- **Menno Haven, Inc. and Menno Haven Penn Hall, Inc.**, integrated retirement communities, announce an opening for ***president***. These long-term care communities are seeking someone who will support the fulfillment of their vision: "Guided by Christian principles, Menno Haven, Inc. and Menno Haven Penn Hall, Inc., will be the premier senior care providers in the south central Pennsylvania region. Energized by holistic caring, they foster participation, champion continuous learning and encourage self-reliance. Anticipating changing needs, wants and expectations, they respond with innovative programming and partnering to enable success for all." The president is expected to shape an organizational culture around the core values of excellence, service, stewardship, integrity and teamwork. Other responsibilities include directing the development of annual strategic plans and budgets and hiring and directing the management team. Adherence to Anabaptist Christian values is required, as is having or being eligible to acquire a Pennsylvania license as a nursing home administrator.

  Send resumes and inquiries by Nov. 25 to Tim Stair, Mennonite Health Services, 234 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; fax 219-534-3254.

- **Goshen College** seeks ***business information systems faculty***. Starting August 1999, Goshen College seeks faculty member to teach undergraduate business information systems courses. Qualified candidate will hold MBA or doctorate and possess significant professional experience and demonstrated effectiveness as a teacher. Full-time position with a view to tenure.

  For further information, send resume to Paul A. Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email dean@goshen.edu. We encourage applications through Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

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by Omar Eby

The little dark birds of winter

Save me, for I am yours.—Psalm 119:94

The little dark birds of winter, wearing bright feathers and fur ruff, come to the feeder within 15 minutes of my setting it up this morning. "Save me," they seemed to say yesterday, hunched under pine boughs, waiting out the heavy snowfall. "Save me, for I am yours." Not in any sense of ownership but stewardship. So I do my bit to "save" the winter birds. "I am yours to enjoy," their flash of feathers and glint of eye seem to say to me.

Now a flock of lowly purple finches flies down and takes cover under the plastic glass roof. They have a congregate beauty greater than the individual—brown-feathered, purple-vested and mufflered. They feed nervously, as they do when sleeping together in the ivy on the dining room basement wall, where once I disturbed a group. I had gone out with a flashlight to cut some trails of ivy. They stumbled out of the ivy and into my hands, sleep and light-blinded. "Save me! Save me!" they cried to each other.

"What must I do to be saved?" the Philippian jailer cries out after a sleep-interrupting earthquake. Paul and Silas, singing in the dark prison, tell about a Jesus the poor wretch knows nothing of, steeped in the superstitions of Rome, Greece, his own household gods.

Now a blue jay, fat, rough, raucous from a section of town brawlers, flaps in, cursing, daring. All the little dark birds scatter, crying, "Save me!" Securing this new feeder, the jay summons his ilk with screams. They attend his summons.

"Save me, Lord, for I am yours." I go to the dean at 1 p.m. for a five-year contract renewal discussion. What have I achieved in the last five years? What are my goals for the next five, which brings me to retirement? Dear God, help me muddle through, survive, day by day; I cannot think of anything I want to risk now, too full of fears about how little I've done well, and this at the end of a career; too full of considerations about quitting altogether; too full of fears that I cannot discern clearly what "seems good to the Holy Spirit and me."

"Save me"—from what? "Save me"—for what? Mostly, I suppose, from myself. From all that is base in myself.

O Lord, save me, for I am yours. Amen.

Unshakable trust

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.—Psalm 125:1

A trust that cannot be shaken. In his metaphoric language, the poet thinks of a mountain as embodying those elements comparable to a faith in Jehovah: permanence, beauty, indestructibleness. One sets aside those small aspects of the metaphor that do not fit—an earthquake or volcano that can "move a mountain." Permissible also is some hyperbolic language with metaphor, a slight exaggeration for a better emphasis.

A trust that cannot be shaken. Until bad things happen to good people? "Do good, O Lord, to those who are good" (verse 4). That injunction is curious, as if in the past God has done evil to his good people, as if God needs a persuasive nudge from time to time to "do good to those who are good." I look around and think, It is not easy to believe there is a God who is also active in human affairs.

A trust that cannot be shaken. We have no Mount Zion here but a Massanutten Peak and a Mole Hill. Over 600 million years ago, our local geologists tell us, Rockingham County lay under ocean water—shallow, warm as the Caribbean. And over those years, tens of millions of tiny sea animals lay down their skeletons until a 19-mile deep bed of limestone formed. Meanwhile the collision of the African and North American continents took place during the next multimillion years. A continental intercourse thrust up our Blue Ridge and Appalachian mountains. Silt settled in the water, the waters pushed into broad rivers. The rain run-off and springs flushed out the salty water. And, voila, we have Rockingham County 600 millions year later.

For what do I trust the Lord? With my very life, with my family, with my career, that it have meaning, that a good God awaits people made good by the blood of his son, Jesus.

O Lord, I am unshaken forever, if I can but trust thee. Amen.

Omar Eby teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. His column appears once each month.

Faith resources

Mennonite Women has released its Bible study guide *Sisterhood/Servanthood: Mending a Broken World* by Rose Mary Stutzman. Rather than seeing servanthood as being a doormat or as a subtle way to control others, Stutzman describes how servanthood is participation in God's longing to bring healing and hope to the world. Three copies of the study guide have been sent to each women's group associated with Mennonite Women. Additional copies may be purchased for $4 U.S., $5 Cdn. from Mennonite Women, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

The Bosnian Student Project, A Response to Genocide by Doug Hostetter (Pendle Hill, 1997) includes photos, a map and a complete list of students and schools in the project, which brings Bosnian students out of a genocidal war and places them in U.S. homes and schools. It is available for $3.25, plus $1 shipping for first copy, $.50 for each additional copy, from Fellowship of Reconciliation, P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960.

Feeding the Flock: Restaurants and Churches You'd Stand in Line For by Russell Chandler (The Alban Institute, $14.95 U.S.) applies Chandler's theory of restaurant popularity to church growth in areas like "curbside appeal," honesty, friendliness, accessibility, variety and atmosphere.

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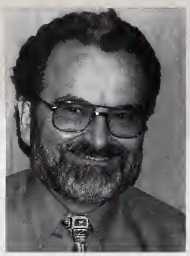

J. Lorne Peachey

You can go home again

Thomas Wolfe said it can't be done. Even those who haven't read his novel *You Can't Go Home Again* believe it's true: Once you leave the familiar, the comfortable, the predictable, you can never go back and recapture what once was. That's likely why change is so scary for so many.

I must admit I was a bit scared when I decided to attend the 100th anniversary of my home congregation—Locust Grove Mennonite, Belleville, Pa.—last month. Would everything be so strange and different that I would regret I had come? Would my memories of the past clash so much with the realities of the present that I would rue the day I let reality cloud memory?

At first it seemed so. I had a terrible time with names and got people all mixed up, so much so that Janet and Libbs had to lecture me on how to keep them apart in my mind until the next time we met. Some of the stories I heard were downright wrong according to the way I had remembered them. Even some I told had people in the audience shaking their heads at my scrambled memory.

In the midst of whatever we have to do, we must never forget that God calls us first to relationships.

Halfway through the celebration, however, I began to pick up a theme. It came mostly with the names of two men who were leaders of this 300-member congregation during my growing-up years. One was an uncle of mine, Emanuel Peachey, both pastor and bishop, the one who baptized me and who died at age 54, partly from the stress of his job. The other was his successor, Erie Renno, now retired, a former pastor who has become a good friend.

Both men had a tough job. They were subsequent leaders of a congregation started in 1898 as a protest against "liberal" trends in the church, a congregation that still values a certain amount of independence from other churches in the area known as Big Valley. Emanuel and Erie were in charge when this congregation had to pick its way through the cultural, economic and social changes that buffeted many a rural Mennonite church in the 1940s, '50s and '60s. For Locust Grove, these were the years of abandoning "plain" clothing, of going from farming to small business employment, of putting up TV antennae and tuning the car radio to Christian broadcasting.

But that's not what surfaced during Locust Grove's 100th anniversary weekend. Instead of hearing about the work and beliefs of these two leaders, I heard about their relationships in story after story. Here were pastors who would ask students who were home for the holidays for their views of the church—not the other way round. Here were men who would give up making hay or driving bus to sit with a dying member's family. Here were people willing to drive 200 miles to preach at a wedding, as Erie did for mine 35 years ago.

As I listened, I realized I had models for how I deal with change. What is important is not the words I can repeat, the arguments I can mount, even the beliefs I can articulate. I can deal with uncertainty and change as I cultivate relationships.

Change, of course, is what the Mennonite church is about these days. Not only do we have to find our way in relation to a culture becoming more and more anti-Christian, but we are also faced with huge and often painful changes within the church itself. Nowhere is this more evident than in merging the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.

Sometimes it's tempting to think that if we can get all our beliefs synchronized and our structures on track, things will be much easier. What I learned in mid-October is that beliefs and structures will soon be forgotten. What will last will be the relationships that we cultivate, first with God, then with each other—both the old ones with which we are familiar and the new ones that will come our way.

I didn't expect all this simply through two days of celebrating 100 years with my home congregation. But it was there, quietly, humbly but firmly in the people I met and the stories I heard. In the midst of whatever we have to do, we must never forget that God calls us first to relationships. When we get that straight, we can embrace change and uncertainty. And we can go home. Over and over.—*jlp*

New web page: You can now download the lead article and news story of each week's *The Mennonite* from our new web site—*http://www.mph.org/themennonite*. The stories are in Adobe Acrobat. If you don't have the current version (which comes with MS Windows 95 and 98 for PC users), you can use the Adobe link to download the free software. Then click on the stories you want to read, and the pages will appear as they are in each week's *The Mennonite*.—jlp

the Mennonite

November 24, 1998

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Second not like the first

The Nov. 3 editorial ("Might the Second Be Like the First?") has confused the first and second comings of Christ. His first coming was to carry out God's plan of redemption through his death on the cross and his shed blood. That proved God's mercy. His second coming is to carry out God's plan of justice based on his absolute holiness.

To see the purpose of Jesus' second coming, we need to read Revelation 19:11-21, where Jesus, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, returns to put down the worldwide rebellion of the antichrist and the false prophet.

Let us take to heart Jesus' words in Luke 21:36: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Instead of playing down divine justice, we ought to warn everyone that we must all stand before God and receive righteous judgment. We urge all to see the mercy of God now.—*J. Otis Yoder, Breezewood, Pa.*

The Nov. 3 editorial suggests that Jesus' second coming could be like his first. Hebrews 9:28 states, "So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him." He came the first time as one of us to identify with us and become the sin sacrifice. He perfectly fulfilled and completed that work. But make no mistake, the second coming will be in power and great glory. Jesus will come the second time with an entirely different appearance and purpose. Please don't confuse the two. This only encourages acceptance of the many false christs who will appear and deceive many before our triumphant and victorious Lord and Savior appears.—*J. Irvin Zook, Belleville, Pa.*

I was shocked when I read the Nov. 3 editorial, which seems to show a woeful ignorance of New Testament teachings. For example, the editorial stated: "The Bible does promise that death and evil will be defeated. It does not tell us how." Read Matthew 13:38-43; 1 Peter 3:7,10, 13; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3,9; and Revelation 11:15,18. The prophets foretold two comings of the Messiah: first as the Lamb of God to suffer for the sins of the world, and then as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.—*Alfred E. Sauer, Moundridge, Kan.*

Depicting cold realities

Melanie Zuercher's article "Out on the Edge" (Oct. 27) was excellent and interesting. It accurately showed the rather cold reality of North American Mennonite churches, as well as bringing hope for our ministry. Part of Michelle Armster's comments on North American Mennonite churches—"The approach is open arms, but make sure you learn that hymn, 6-0-whatever, and like rhubarb pie"—was a humorous but acute observation. Exactly! I got a kick out of it.—*Shuji Moriichi, Stanchfield, Minn.*

Naming names

When will we start using the names people themselves prefer rather than using the terms we prefer, or worse, the terms we think are politically correct? There is a resurgence of pride in the term Indian Peoples in the United States. The brief review of the film *Smoke Signals* (Oct. 13) states, "Written and acted by Native Americans (they call themselves Indians), this funny … " The parenthetical phrase is a bit condescending. If they call themselves Indians, then who are we to decide this is inappropriate? I maintain it is better to ask people what they prefer to be called and then honor them by doing so with respect and honor.

For those politically correct (PC) Mennonites who argue that the name Indian or Indian Peoples is inappropriate because of its associations with the European invasion of this land, ponder a parallel. How would you feel if the PC theologians and church historians at Harvard Divinity School or the University of Chicago decided that Mennonites should no longer be referred to as Anabaptists because it was a term originally used against the radical reformers by their oppressors. I suspect that more than a few Anabaptists-Mennonites would object, some even vehemently, because the name now represents 500 years of history and culture, the identity, of a people. Many of my friends in indigenous communities object just as strongly to the dominant culture telling them they can't proudly call themselves Indian Peoples.—*Bruce D. Martin, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Popular theology

I appreciated the editorial on three avenues of theology: professional, pastoral and popular ("I'm Not a Theologian, But … ," Oct. 20). Since the latter was given an encouraging nod, I hope for a popular theology response to a popular theology question: If, at the Last Supper, Jesus dipped in the dish with a certified sinner,

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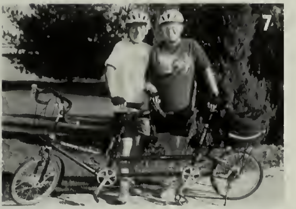
features



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readers say

how is it that we disciples are not to share the Last Supper, in remembrance, with Christians who are voted to be certified sinners by some majorities in some Mennonite conferences and congregations?—*Ruth Eitzen, Barto, Pa.*

Pastoral compliments and complaints

In a previous church there were a couple of people who were discontented, and it was murmured that they were going to cause trouble at the annual meeting when the pastoral vote was to be taken. These people even got at least one inactive person to attend the meeting. But the congregation had gotten wind of the problem, and they started the meeting with various members saying various positive things about the pastor. This took all the wind out of the sails of those that had come to cause trouble, and they ended up saying nothing.

Mennonites don't want to praise the pastor for fear that he will get a big head, but honest compliments can discourage those that often complain. Perhaps congregational members should think of what they do when they hear someone running down the pastor. Do they step in and say anything positive, or do they just keep quiet? That silence may be taken as agreement and can compound the problem. —*Carol Kosanke Peterson, Freeman, S.D.*

The guilt game

Why do we feel so self-conscious about relating that we give it a name ("How the Deck Is Stacked in the Mennonite Game," Oct. 6)? The charge that blood is thicker than religion in the Mennonite church is a perverse generalization that does not square with the testimonials of multiethnic Mennonites in the several congregations where I have worshiped. It is sad the writer has apparently had a different experience. I am not sure if I should feel guilty about that.—*John D. Rohrer, Plain City, Ohio*

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The anonymous turkey

by J. Lawrence Burkholder

Those who see even an anonymous turkey as a gift of God are most likely to spend Thanksgiving Day at their church or mission feeding the poor.

When I was a boy our neighbor had a turkey named Bill. This turkey was immense and did not like little children. He strutted, preened his feathers and gobbled as if he owned the barnyard. He was handsome, regal, colorful and mean. No one liked him, but everyone respected him. Later Bill paid the supreme price for being a turkey in a land where since 1862 America gives thanks to God annually by presidential proclamation. Bill's life ended on the Thanksgiving dinner table as an ample symbol of God's grace and nature's bounty.

Turkeys were scarce in those days. Most people could not afford them. As a child, I hoped for a Thanksgiving turkey sometime, but we never had one. Even those with greater means ate turkey only once or twice a year. Turkey was special. Norman Rockwell captured the sacred significance of the barnyard turkey in his folksy painting of a New England farm family gathered at a table, with heads bowed in heartfelt devotion. For much of American history, Thanksgiving has remained a national holiday when food, family, piety and patriotism come together.

In recent years, as I bought our turkey at a supermarket, I was impressed by my lack of feeling. The turkey I bought was supposed to be fresh, but I had no idea where it came from. I presumed it was raised on someone's ranch along with thousands of others with standing room only. It was probably hatched by incubator, fed fortified rations, inoculated against disease, injected with growth hormones, slaughtered electronically, dressed mechanically, shipped, chilled and dumped into a refrigerated bin along with others.

The festive, reverential spirit of anticipation, joy and gratitude I once associated with a Thanksgiving turkey was absent. The turkey was anonymous, a commodity without character, personality, place, history or gender as far as I was concerned.

Nevertheless, we enjoyed the anonymous turkey and gave thanks to God for it, though our thanks were subdued. We were grateful to God in the sense that we were grateful for life itself—but not for the turkey in particular. It took a lot of imagination to think of God as the giver of a virtually manufactured product.

The ways of providence: If providence means that God provides, how does God provide for us? We must learn to associate God with a broad spectrum of natural and historical processes, not just with the particular, the unique and the spectacular. After all, God does not appear to break into our immediate situation and visibly give us what we need. Instead God comes to us through thousands of mediating factors in what appears to be a normal flow of events. The challenge of faith today is to think of God working in and through an elaborate, causal evolutionary system.

When we wish our friends traveling mercies and pray for their safety, we are praying in effect that God provide sober drivers, good pilots, safe airplanes and fair weather. And when we pray for hospital patients, we pray that medical personnel be at their professional best and that no accidents occur.

The way God actually relates to us is the greatest of mysteries. God is closer to us than any human being or natural object can be, yet God is more removed from us than any person or natural object. God mysteriously transcends everyone and everything. "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18). Just how God acts in the world we do not know. It may have been easier some years ago, when life was relatively simple, to imagine God at work in the world. But how the Creator sustains nature and shapes history is beyond the understanding of any age.

Our understanding of providence is complicated these days by the fact that God's world is increasingly becoming our world. Forces we earlier assigned to God or to nature are now in our hands. We clone sheep, manipulate genes, communicate globally with the speed of light and fly beyond the speed of sound. Yet the more we become self-sufficient, the more insecure some of us feel. We are impressed with our power, but the more power we exercise, the more we are forced to find God even in our own machinations. Increasingly we must now assume responsibility for how history turns out.

A tradition at our home is to begin our Thanksgiving meal by reading passages from Genesis 8-9. In this account God promises never again to destroy all living creatures (8:21).

Then follows a poetic verse intended to assure us that certain ordinary repetitions of nature will never cease. Thanksgiving becomes a time to celebrate "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night" (8:22).

But can we celebrate ordinary, recurring operations of nature and history we normally take for granted? Can we associate providence with process? Or is our faith, our piety more likely to be associated with unique places, miraculous events, burning bushes, sacred ground, religious festivals, mountains, temples, charismatic leaders, Pentecost and end times?

Faith that rests entirely on the unique and the dramatic leaves much of life without meaning. God may be in the thunder, the whirlwind, temples, rituals and mighty acts, but most of our days are spent doing ordinary things like making a living. Many of us do humdrum work in domestic services of one kind or another. Even church work can be routine. Miracles are rare, epiphanies are scarce. Christmas and Easter come only once a year. Day follows night, and night follows day, in season and out of season. The challenge is to hold both what is changing and what is changeless in a framework of faith without becoming sentimental or cynical.

The manifold works of God: Once, while visiting western Canada, I made a disparaging remark about the bleak barrenness of the Saskatchewan prairie compared with the majesty of the Canadian Rockies. An artist politely suggested that if I had a more developed sense of beauty I could appreciate the flat prairies as well. After all, the prairies made room for the sky. And if we have a mature appreciation for the manifold works of God, it may be possible to see the providential hand in what we consider the predictable and normal.

The challenge is to hold both what is changing and what is changeless in a framework of faith without becoming sentimental or cynical.

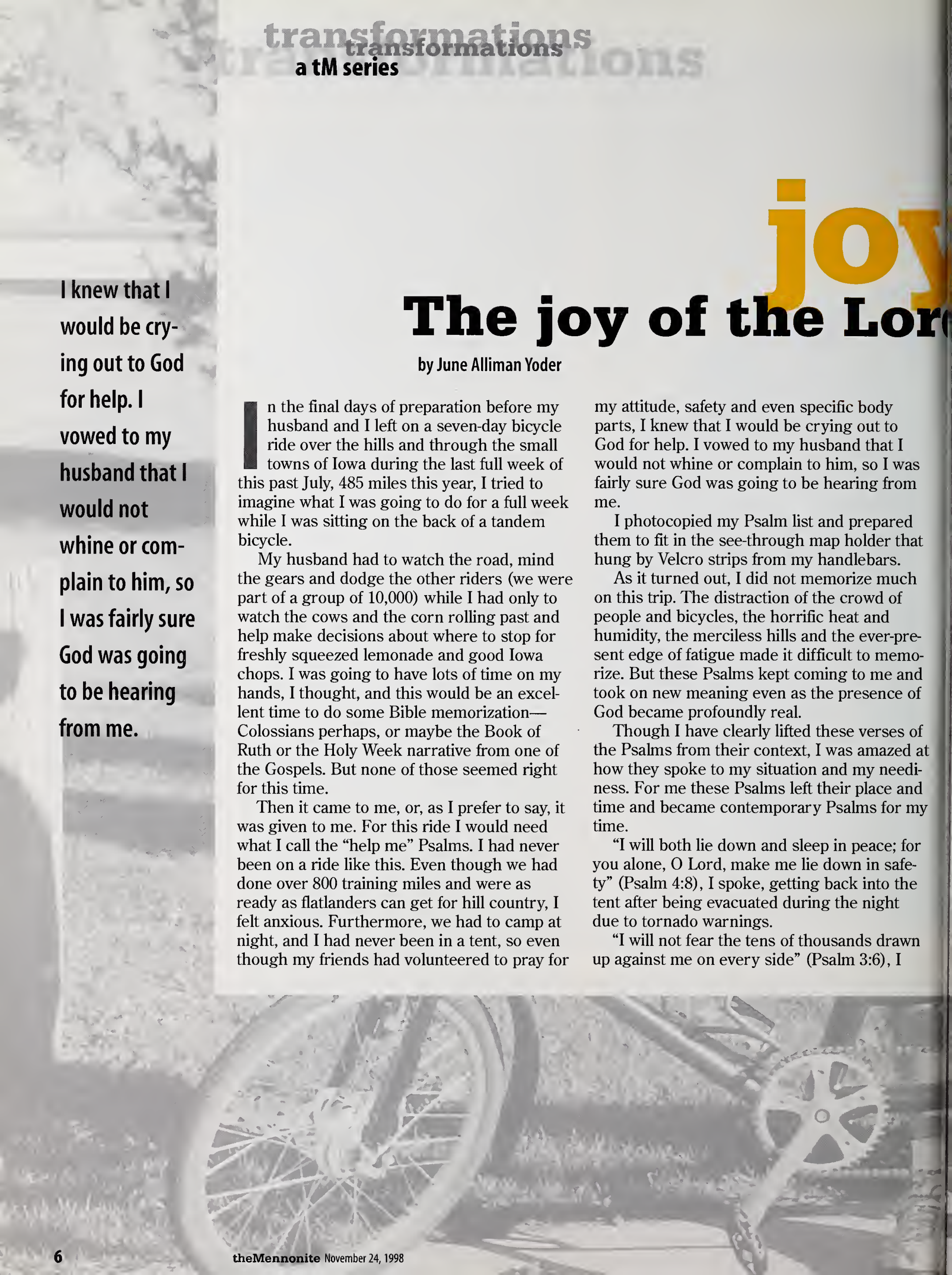
One compensation of old age may be the ability to associate God with life as it is. Old people can say with serenity, "That's life." Older Christians know that the more life changes the more it remains the same. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "A person cannot place one's foot in the same flowing stream a second time." The water is always being replaced and the banks eroded. Nevertheless, the stream remains a stream. God is the author of constant change and enduring stability. Older people understand that "there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

The ability to live thankfully for God's providence is a gift of faith. It does not regard the random character of human existence as completely strange and forbidding. Thanksgiving is in the soul of the believer.

Furthermore, there is a correlation between believing in providence and living providently. It is no accident that those most conscious of divine providence are also agents of God's providence. Those who see even an anonymous turkey as a gift of God are most likely to spend Thanksgiving Day at their church or mission feeding the poor.

The movement from the barnyard turkey to the processed turkey may symbolize a process in Western society in which certain expressions of cultic religion enjoyed especially by a privileged aristocracy are now socialized to the benefit of the masses. Now ordinary working people eat turkey. Could this be in line with the prophetic teaching that God prefers justice to ritual if they exclude each other? "I hate, I despise your festivals, I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. … But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:21, 24).

J. Lawrence Burkholder, former president of Goshen College, lives in Goshen, Ind.



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The joy of the Lor

by June Alliman Yoder

> I knew that I would be crying out to God for help. I vowed to my husband that I would not whine or complain to him, so I was fairly sure God was going to be hearing from me.

In the final days of preparation before my husband and I left on a seven-day bicycle ride over the hills and through the small towns of Iowa during the last full week of this past July, 485 miles this year, I tried to imagine what I was going to do for a full week while I was sitting on the back of a tandem bicycle.

My husband had to watch the road, mind the gears and dodge the other riders (we were part of a group of 10,000) while I had only to watch the cows and the corn rolling past and help make decisions about where to stop for freshly squeezed lemonade and good Iowa chops. I was going to have lots of time on my hands, I thought, and this would be an excellent time to do some Bible memorization—Colossians perhaps, or maybe the Book of Ruth or the Holy Week narrative from one of the Gospels. But none of those seemed right for this time.

Then it came to me, or, as I prefer to say, it was given to me. For this ride I would need what I call the "help me" Psalms. I had never been on a ride like this. Even though we had done over 800 training miles and were as ready as flatlanders can get for hill country, I felt anxious. Furthermore, we had to camp at night, and I had never been in a tent, so even though my friends had volunteered to pray for my attitude, safety and even specific body parts, I knew that I would be crying out to God for help. I vowed to my husband that I would not whine or complain to him, so I was fairly sure God was going to be hearing from me.

I photocopied my Psalm list and prepared them to fit in the see-through map holder that hung by Velcro strips from my handlebars.

As it turned out, I did not memorize much on this trip. The distraction of the crowd of people and bicycles, the horrific heat and humidity, the merciless hills and the ever-present edge of fatigue made it difficult to memorize. But these Psalms kept coming to me and took on new meaning even as the presence of God became profoundly real.

Though I have clearly lifted these verses of the Psalms from their context, I was amazed at how they spoke to my situation and my neediness. For me these Psalms left their place and time and became contemporary Psalms for my time.

"I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety" (Psalm 4:8), I spoke, getting back into the tent after being evacuated during the night due to tornado warnings.

"I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side" (Psalm 3:6), I

Supplied by author

The author (right) with John, her husband, and their tandem bicycle.

my strength

repeated on the first miles of the first day, when hoards of bicycles surrounded us.

"Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my sighing" (Psalm 5:1), I uttered after a rest break, knowing that 40 miles of hills lay ahead.

"Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are in agony" (Psalm 6:2), I gasped after two days of hills, heat and humidity.

"How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" (Psalm 13:1), I murmured on the 82-mile day when the 118-degree heat index made the roads simmer the riders.

"Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge" (Psalm 16:1), I prayed going down a hill at 40 miles per hour with a bridge under repair at the bottom.

"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7), I thought while showering in the local car wash.

"They grumbled in their tents" (Psalm 106:25), I copied after cleaning off with a hose designed to wash airplanes behind the hangar at the airport.

"I lift my eyes to the hills; where does my help come from?" (Psalm 121:1), I uttered on the last day, somewhere on the 67 miles of hills.

My life's journey has not been difficult, though I have experienced some major bumps in the road. But on this ride I met my limits. I knew that I was in beyond what I could manage, and my very being called out to God for my primal needs. The Psalms' language is the language of the soul, the core of one's being. It is the language that calls out for help, for protection, for comfort, for mercy, for rest.

I am grateful for how this ride brought me to a new level of understanding God's Word. I recognize myself and those around me as living in the Scriptures, not standing thousands of years away looking at the Scriptures. But the great gift of this encounter with the Psalms is to realize the Scriptures' willingness to embrace us in every condition of our lives.

Through the Psalms I can go to God with my sins, my inadequacies, my fears and when I feel lost and faint. God does not require us to be able. Indeed God empowers me, and the joy of the Lord is my strength.

June Alliman Yoder lives in Goshen, Ind., with her husband, John D. Yoder. She teaches preaching and communication at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., and is a member of College Mennonite Church in Goshen.

Through the Psalms I can go to God with my sins, my inadequacies, my fears and when I feel lost and faint. God does not require us to be able.

What changes have you made in your life in the last two years because of your involvement with God's Word? We've asked various people throughout the Mennonite world. Their replies will appear approximately every other week in *The Mennonite* for the next several months in this series called Transformations.
—Editors

Belizeans float hope for Mitch's victims

Colony Mennonites supplying food to Hondurans

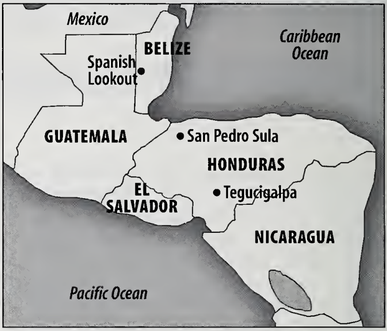
WINNIPEG—As the world's largest aid agencies geared up for massive Hurricane Mitch relief efforts, a small group of Mennonites in Belize was already ferrying food supplies in boats to Honduras. Within days of Hurricane Mitch's destructive swath across Latin America, members of conservative Mennonite colonies in Belize had distributed one-pound mixes of rice and beans to some 14,000 Hondurans.

> **They will totally depend on the food we will bring them.**
>
> *—Frank Plett*

"People were hollering, … showing that they wanted food and water," says Frank Plett, a member of the Spanish Lookout colony and an organizer of the relief effort. "We couldn't stop at all the places where people were hollering.

"Once they saw there was a boat with food, there were hundreds of people just swarming the boat."

In addition to continuing the distribution by boat, Belizean Mennonites are collecting 80 tons of beans, rice and corn to be shipped to Honduras with the help of Mennonite Central Committee. The food is scheduled to arrive Nov. 21. Many people at Spanish Lookout are also sending food, including fresh baked goods, by airplane.



Other than receiving heavy rains, Spanish Lookout missed Mitch's wrath, and members moved quickly after the storm to assist victims elsewhere. The roads and rivers around Spanish Lookout were flooded, but members managed to get out by a circuitous route on Nov. 5. They hauled food by truck to Placentia, a resort community on the coast. From there the first shipment of food was carried to Honduras by government boat.

That has been followed by shipments on smaller, donated boats. By Nov. 11, some 14 boats had arrived at the Honduran coastal town of Puerto Cortes, then traveled up the Ulua River about 20 miles, stopping to distribute food at villages along the way.

Plett says most people in the area they are assisting, east of the city of San Pedro Sula, escaped with their lives but lost their possessions. They have been drinking contaminated water, and their animals drowned in the floods.

Plett says many of the villagers he met were surviving on green bananas, but the trees were standing in water and quickly dying. "So they will totally depend on the food we will bring them," he says.

Plett says the Belize Mennonites are committed to continue the Honduras relief distributions with help from other agencies. "Actually, I would say they'll pretty well depend on us for the next six months," he says.

There are approximately 5,000 Mennonites in Belize. They moved there from Canada and Mexico for religious reasons starting 40 years ago.—*Carol Thiessen for MCC Canada News Service*

MCC steps up hurricane response

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee supporters have already brought some 2,000 hurricane relief kits to MCC warehouses, putting the agency on the way toward its goal of 20,000 kits for victims of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua. The first shipment of kits will leave Nov. 23, and a second will be sent shortly before Christmas.

MCC has authorized as much as $1 million for Hurricane Mitch relief and rehabilitation. Mitch, one of the deadliest storms in Latin American history, killed more than 10,000 people. There are unconfirmed reports of two Honduran Mennonites among the casualties.

To help develop long-term responses, MCC has also sent four former Latin America workers to the region for three months: Jim Hershberger of Linville, Va., who served in Nicaragua from 1985 to 1998; Jon Nofziger of St. Adolph, Man., who served in Nicaragua from 1990 to 1992; Jacob Schiere of Drachten, Netherlands, who served in Guatemala from 1983 to 1990; and Luke Schrock-Hurst of Pittsburgh, who served in Honduras from 1982 to 1983 and from 1986 to 1989.—*MCC News Service*

VS reunion reaffirms power of God

Unit taught peace 'in a cruel, conflicted, confusing world'

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—It was the type of thing they needed to pray about, Roman Stutzman said.

Mennonite Board of Missions' Kansas City Voluntary Service (VS) unit in 1958 wanted help to acquire an old corner tavern and convert it into a church and parsonage. So at unit leader Stutzman's suggestion at a midweek community prayer service, everyone got on their knees.

One neighborhood youth, 11-year-old Billy Golden, sensing the urgency of the situation and uncomfortable with his posture, surprised everyone by speaking first: "Well, God, you know our problem. It's such a mountain for us, but it's just a little molehill for you."

Stutzman declared the meeting over after that simple prayer. It was all that needed to be said. A week and a half later, a fire closed the tavern, and the unit got the building.

Fast-forward 40 years to a Kansas City VS unit reunion. A man steps to a microphone and says, "My name is William Golden." Now living in Tulsa, Okla., he says he never doubted the power of prayer since that childhood experience.

The Oct. 16-18 reunion in Kansas City brought together former VS unit members, participants in Hesston (Kan.) College's nurses' training program at Kansas City General Hospital and community members. At the reunion, attended by some 200 people, laughter, hugs and reminiscences gave way to affirmations of faith in the power of God.

"VS made more of a difference for the VSers than those we were supposed to serve," said Gloria Frank, who now lives in Portland, Ore.

But the testimonies of others showed that the unit and its members did indeed have an impact on the community. "The people in the VS unit taught us about finding peace in a cruel, conflicted, confusing world," said former neighborhood kid James Holt, now pastor of Marymount Community Church in Cincinnati, during the Sunday-morning worship service. "In a world that is always trying to quiet God's next miracle, we cry out in faith to Jesus and, as a result, perpetuate a blessing."

The unit was started in 1948 but struggled until 1952, when Stutzman and his wife, Mariana, became unit leaders, where they remained until the unit was closed in 1972. Roman Stutzman died last December. In his memory, the reunion participants collected $1,700 in support of Mennonite Voluntary Service. Mennonite Board of Missions and the Commission on Home Ministries have integrated their voluntary service programs to create MVS.

Those attending the reunion each had a chance to visit with Mariana Stutzman. "So, is God still real?" she asked her visitors. "It's wonderful to talk about what God used to do, but tell me what he's doing in your life today." *—MBM News Service*

MBM photo by Wayne Gehman

A trip with frills

Glenola Leinbach (right) of Goshen, Ind., presents a handmade doily to David Moser, Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions worker in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and his wife, Debbie Watters, in gratitude for their hospitality during her October visit to Ireland and Northern Ireland. Leinbach won the trip as a door prize at an MBM banquet last year. She was accompanied on her trip by her daughter, Barbara Lehman of Dayton, Ohio.

Accident claims new pastor's life

Mountain View Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va., was looking forward to having its first long-term pastor in seven years. The congregation is looking again after the death of Paul B. Slabach, who had been Mountain View's pastor for only four months.

Slabach, 37, was driving home from the church office on Oct. 27, when a fire truck loaded with water lost control and veered into the lane of oncoming traffic, meeting Slabach's van head on.

The funeral was held Oct. 31. Survivors include his wife, Regina, and three children.

Mountain View had been without a permanent pastor since Aug. 31, 1991, when Stan Shirk stepped down after 10 years in the position. Interim pastors served until 1995, when Phil Kanagy became pastor, serving for two years.

Slabach became pastor on July 1. He had served on an interim leadership team at Faith Mennonite Church, Cluster Springs, Va., from 1996 until May of this year.

MCCer evacuates Iraq as tensions build

AKRON, Pa.—Wanda Kraybill, Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) only worker in Iraq, left Baghdad on Nov. 13 for Amman, Jordan, under the looming threat of U.S. and British military action against Iraq.

Kraybill is scheduled to conclude her term in late November or early December. But she says she would like to return to Iraq before doing so. Before she left, Kraybill arranged for glass windows to be installed at a mental hospital and for the 1,200 patients to have winter clothing.

Meanwhile, the director of the MCC U.S. Washington Office says an attack on Iraq would play into Saddam Hussein's hands. "Bombing will only strengthen President Saddam Hussein's position with his people," J. Daryl Byler told a Nov. 13 news conference on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus. "There is a very clear sense [in Iraq] that the United States is the cause of problems."

Byler returned Nov. 5 after 10 days in Iraq as a member of a seven-person MCC delegation.

Sanctions imposed against Iraq since the 1991 Persian Gulf War have had devastating effects on the country. "That impact is landing with brutal force on innocent children," says delegation member Bob Herr of MCC's Peace Office. "Rates of child malnutrition and disease are all up sharply in recent years. Many of Iraq's water filtration systems remain in disrepair, and even the most basic medicines are scarce."

Said Byler, "It is immoral to make children suffer because of concerns over arms issues."

MCC's plan to supply leukemia medicines to 50 Iraqi children has been on hold since before the renewed tensions due to a series of delays in both Iraq and in Jordan, where the medicines were purchased. The project was scheduled to begin earlier this year.

MCC has purchased a two-year medicine supply—a complete treatment—for 50 children. The medicines, valued at $100,000, remain in refrigerated storage in Jordan. —*MCC News Service with* Goshen College Record

It is immoral to make children suffer because of concerns over arms issues.

—J. Daryl Byler

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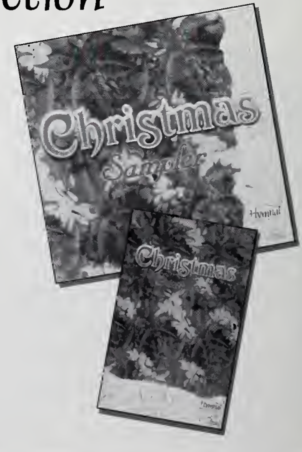

Speaker: Homosexuality a faith, not science, issue

MOUNT JOY, Pa.—While many scientists agree that evidence of homosexuality's biological roots is inconclusive, says Enos Martin, it is ultimately a faith issue.

"We cannot pass our responsibility to decide how we should live to science," he says. "Do we believe that God has spoken clearly about how we should manage our sexuality or do we not?"

Martin, a Lancaster Conference bishop and associate professor of psychiatry at Penn State University, was one of the speakers at an Oct. 31 conference on sexual healing held at Kraybill Mennonite School, Mount Joy. The conference was sponsored by Day Seven Ministries, a Lancaster-affiliated organization addressing sexual disorders.

Seasons over too quickly for Hesston, EMU teams

Two college teams have seen their dreams of national championships dashed in post-season tournaments.

For the third consecutive year, the Hesston (Kan.) College volleyball team qualified for the national tournament of the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III. But the Larks did not get out of pool play in the Nov. 13-14 tournament, held in Toledo, Ohio. Hesston defeated Lehigh Carbon Community College of Schnecksville, Pa., but lost to Ridgewater College of Willmar, Minn., and Owens Community College of Toledo.

In a bid for the national tournament, the field hockey team of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., fell 1-0 to Hartwick College of Oneonta, N.Y., in regional playoffs on Nov. 6. EMU entered the game with a perfect 23-0 record and was the top-ranked team in the National College Athletic Association Division III.

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Of the 85 ministers in the Association of German Mennonite Congregations, only 23 are paid.—*Courier*

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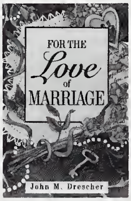

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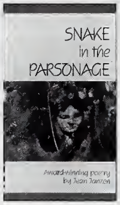

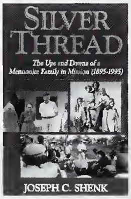
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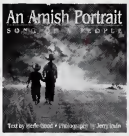

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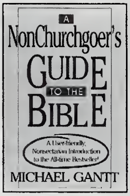
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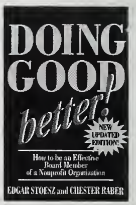
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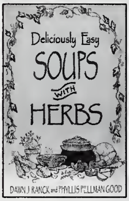

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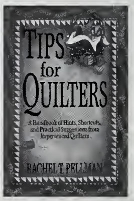
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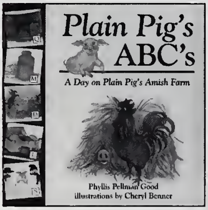
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Births

Beachy, Cassidy Michal, Oct. 27, to Denise (Classen) and Michael Beachy, Plain City, Ohio.

Forbes, Alexis Haley, Nov. 3, to Julie (Godshall) and Steve Forbes, Hampton, Va.

Greaser, Abigail Brunk, Sept. 21, to Alan and Jeannie (Brunk) Greaser, Ashland, Va.

Harder, Jonathan Isaiah, April 16, 1998, received for adoption Oct. 22, by Jeanette (Stoesz) and Stan Harder, Dallas, Texas.

Hostetler, Ireland Sue, Oct. 31, to Keith and Michelle (Reid) Hostetler, Kalona, Iowa.

Hostetter, Aaron Matthew, Oct. 10, to David and Miriam (Keeler) Hostetter, Harrisonburg, Va.

Morrow, Andrew Francis, Oct. 15, 1996, received for adoption Sept. 28, 1998, by David and Irene (Schomus) Morrow, Warden, Wash.

Parajon, Scotty Gustavo Xinichi, Oct. 18, to David and Laura Parajon, Albuquerque, N.M.

Regier, Addie Elaine, Oct. 24, to Amy (Albright) and Ken Regier, Newton, Kan.

Styer, Emily Kay, Nov. 1, to Jody (Solomon) and Troy Styer, Quakertown, Pa.

Tedor, Brad Lee, Sept. 5, to Bruce Sr. and Cheryl (Witman) Tedor, Spring City, Pa.

Weber, Alecia Marie, Oct. 2, to Gerald and Janet (Yantzi) Weber, Alma, Ont.

Widrick, Rebekah Elizabeth, Oct. 24, to Merle and Tammy (Takacs) Widrick, Lowville, N.Y.

Wulf, Hanna Rose, Sept. 5, to Carrie (Schmidt) and Jeremy Wulf, Newton, Kan.

Marriages

Beachy/Mast: Wendy Beachy, Sarasota, Fla., and Jeff Mast, Sarasota, Oct. 3 at Bayshore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Bollinger/Eby: Diane Bollinger, Reinholds, Pa., and Philip Eby, Holtwood, Pa., Oct. 10 at Reinholds.

Cameron/Kennell: Breon Cameron, Champaign, Ill., and Becky Kennell, Champaign, Nov. 7 at First English Lutheran Church, Peoria, Ill.

Coburn/Halteman: Daniel Coburn, Accident, Md., and Marlena Halteman, Accident, Oct. 10 at Glade Mennonite Church, Accident.

Enterline/Wasser: Joyce Enterline, Jamestown, Pa., and Brian Wasser, Pittsburgh, Oct. 3 at Spring Creek, Pa.

Friesen/Knutzen: Wade Friesen, Pryor, Okla., and Heidi Knutzen, Sand Creek, Wis., Nov. 21 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, Okla.

Garber/Mullet: Marion Garber, Goshen, Ind., and Florence Martin Mullet, Goshen, Oct. 30 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Herr/Hertzog: Rachel Herr, Columbia, Pa., and James Hertzog, Willow Street, Pa., Oct. 24, at Pequea Brethren in Christ Church, Willow Street.

Homa/Lynch: Brooke Karllynn Homa, Spring City, Pa., and Michael Anthony Lynch, Aug. 21 at Malvern, Pa.

Maury/Sieber: Brian Maury, Newburg, Mo., and Kelli Sieber, Hesston, Kan., Aug. 22 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Oesterle/Szabo: Joseph Oesterle Jr., Line Lexington, Pa., and Vanya Szabo, Spring City, Pa., Oct. 24 at Spring City Fellowship Mennonite Church.

Deaths

Clemmer, Nelson, 82, Royersford, Pa., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Esther Hunsberger Clemmer. Parents: Joseph and Mary Hunsberger (deceased). Other survivors: children Paul, Alverda Delgado, Eunice Charles, Lois Vazquez, Marvin, Glenn, Ken, Cheryl Freed, Rhoda Kidwell; 23 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Upper Skippack Mennonite Church, Creamery, Pa.

Hershberger, Levi, 91, Kansas City, Kan., died Sept. 28. Spouse: Fanny Troyer Hershberger (deceased). Survivors: children Cleora, Calvin, Alvin, Mervin, Marlin; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 2 at Kansas City.

Lam, Hazel Shoemaker, 76, Singers Glen, Va., died Sept. 14. Spouse: Sidney Lam Sr. (deceased). Parents: Jim and Sally Shoemaker (deceased). Survivors: children Sharon Burkholder, Brenda, Gayle Pennington, Joy Hornick, Sidney Jr., Carter; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 16 at Mount Clinton (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Penner, Frank, 99, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 26. Spouse: Bertha Gaeddert Penner. Parents: David and Maria Lohrentz Penner (deceased). Other survivors: children Milferd, Marvella Ratzlaff, Rachel Schmidt; 12 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Unruh, Marlowe Henry, 56, Hesston, Kan., died Oct. 15 of cancer. Spouse: Janice Goering Unruh. Parents: Henry and Sara Unruh (deceased). Other survivors: children Jill Farias, Amy Campbell; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 19 at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Yoder, Edna Weldy, 86, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Raymond Yoder (deceased). Parents: George and Lucretia Weldy (deceased). Survivors: son Richard; foster son Roland Biederer; three grandchildren; five stepgrandchildren; two great-grandchildren; 13 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

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classifieds

Classified advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

- **Light House**, a voc rehab facility in eastern Lancaster County, Pa., is seeking an individual to help ***manage and supervise food packaging*** department. Competitive wages and benefits. Contact Frank King, LHRC, 3431 Division Hwy., New Holland, PA 17557; 717-354-0355.

- **Beaver Camp**, Lowville, N.Y., has a ***caretaker*** position available. This is a VS position for a one- or two-year term. Responsibilities include cooking, housekeeping and some maintenance. Preference given for a couple, but a single will be considered. Housing, food and health insurance supplied. Please contact Emanuel Gingerich at 315-376-2640.

- **Upward Call Counseling Services:** We offer professional counseling with a Christian foundational premise that God unfailingly desires relationship with us who unfailingly need restoration. Counseling with individuals, couples, families; adults and children. Consultation to Mennonite, Wenger Mennonite, Horning Mennonite and Amish ministers who have members needing additional professional counseling.

  For further information, contact Robert Weaver, LSW, BCD, director, Upward Call Counseling Services, 150 E. Franklin St., New Holland, PA 17557; 717-355-2117.

- **From Age to Age: *Historians and the Modern Church***, a festschrift honoring historian Donald F. Durnbaugh. Includes essays by Jeff Bach, Dale W. Brown, Robert Clouse, David Eller, Franklin Littell, William Kostlevy, Donald E. Miller, Murray Wagner, Hans Schneider, Dennis Slabaugh, Dale Stoffer and John Howard Yoder, originally read at a conference at Bridgewater College in October 1997.

  Send check or money order for $18 plus $3 postage and handling to Brethren Life and Thought, c/o Bethany Theological Seminary, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374; or Forum for Religious Studies, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812.

- **Garden Valley Retirement Village** is currently seeking a full-time ***chaplain*** for our 175-unit retirement community. Ideal candidates would be integral team players, providing evangelically Christian spiritual, personal guidance for residents, family members, staff. Req: previous experience in pastoral role, high comfort level working with older adults. Responsibilities include development, coordination of regular religious services such as vespers, Bible studies, prayer meetings, etc.

  Please submit resume and introduction letter to Larry Burmingham, Garden Valley Retirement Village, 1505 E. Spruce, Garden City, KS 67846; fax 316-275-6582.

- **Akron Mennonite Church** seeks a half-time ***children's education minister*** beginning after Feb. 1, 1999, to supervise and resource Christian education activities. Bachelor's degree in education required, theological training preferred.

  Contact Akron Mennonite Church, 1311 Diamond St., Akron, PA 17501, for a job description, or phone 717-859-1488.

- **Bethel College**, North Newton, Kan., seeks ***director of choral activities*** for a variety of choral ensembles including Concert Choir who demonstrates the ability to work with instrumentalists, beginning fall 1999. Doctorate preferred. Background and interest in music education desired. Work with recruitment, teach conducting, with other possible assignments in music education, theory, history, voice or gospel choir. Commitment to undergraduate teaching and advising, interdisciplinary collaboration and Bethel's mission as a church-related college are valued.

  Forward a letter of application and resume with references to Bev Mayer, director of human resources, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117. No tapes; review of resumes begins Jan. 15, 1999. Bethel College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

- **The General Conference Mennonite Church** is seeking a full-time ***director of Ministerial Leadership Services***, to begin Sept. 1, 1999. The director will support ministerial leadership through administration, consultation, workshops, writing, theological reflection and research. Tasks include administering the calling system, support of conference ministers and responding to ministerial issues. Strong personal faith, seminary education (M. Div.), pastoral experience, Anabaptist-Mennonite theology, and a passion for the ministry and mission of the church are required. Other important qualities include strong communication skills, flexibility, discernment, patience, ability to deal with ambiguity, mediation training, willingness to travel, advocate for gender equality and cultural diversity in leadership, and commitment to work in an emerging denomination. This position will be based in Newton, Kan., within the U.S. conference structure.

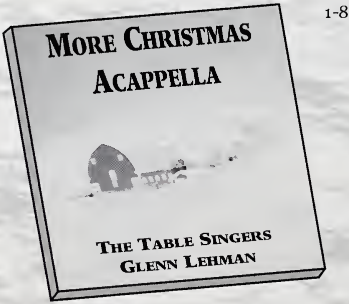
  Send resume to James Schrag, GCMC, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114; email Jims@gcmc.org, by Dec. 15, 1998.

- **Greencroft**, a not-for-profit retirement community located in Goshen, Ind., is seeking a ***health-care administrator***. The administrator will manage day-to-day operations and provide supervision to health-care department heads in the Gables Health Care. Qualified candidates will have, or be able to secure, a valid nursing home administrator license in Indiana, will be experienced in long-term care health care and subacute care administration, and will possess a baccalaureate or higher degree. In addition, qualified candidates will be committed to Christian ministry, able to identify with and support the mission, goals and values of Greencroft, and will possess a supportive and nurturing leadership style.

  Qualified candidates should send letter of interest, resume, salary history and requirements and list of references to Tim Croyle, SPHR, vice president of human resources, Greencroft, P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46527-0819; 219-537-4038; fax 219-537-4067. Greencroft is an equal opportunity employer and is sponsored by Mennonite Health Services.

- **Menno Haven, Inc. and Menno Haven Penn Hall, Inc.**, integrated retirement communities, announce an opening for ***president***. These long-term care communities are seeking someone who will support the fulfillment of their vision: "Guided by Christian principles, Menno Haven, Inc. and Menno Haven Penn Hall, Inc., will be the premier senior care providers in the south central Pennsylvania region. Energized by holistic caring, they foster participation, champion continuous learning and encourage self-reliance. Anticipating changing needs, wants and expectations, they respond with innovative programming and partnering to enable success for all." The president is expected to shape an organizational culture around the core values of excellence, service, stewardship, integrity and teamwork. Other responsibilities include directing the development of annual strategic plans and budgets and hiring and directing the management team. Adherence to Anabaptist Christian values is required, as is having or being eligible to acquire a Pennsylvania license as a nursing home administrator.

  Send resumes and inquiries by Nov. 25 to Tim Stair, Mennonite Health Services, 234 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; fax 219-534-3254.



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The law condemns, the truth sets free

by Martha Kolb-Wyckoff

The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.—John 1:17

In my limited exposure to conference assemblies over the past 10 years, I have been intrigued by the way grace and truth are set against each other. For example, in the middle of a debate on a difficult issue, someone will go to the microphone to remind us of the grace-filled story in John 8. The scribes and teachers of the law bring an adulterous woman to Jesus in hopes that he will condemn her. Instead Jesus says to the woman, "Has no one condemned you? … Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:10-11).

It doesn't take long, then, until someone responds with something like, "Grace is well and good, but we also must speak the truth. We dare not get soft on sin; we must call sin sin." It appears we must choose whether we are for grace or for truth.

In light of this, I have been reflecting on John 1:17. If both grace and truth came through Jesus, they can't be at odds with each other. I expect the two concepts must reinforce and undergird each other. Can it be that the call for truth on the conference floor is more a call for law than for truth? The law is about meting out judgment. It's about condemnation. The law says that you are a sinner, while the truth of the gospel is that I am a sinner. Those two ideas are worlds apart. It is so easy for me to self-righteously call you a sinner, while the truth is that I am a sinner. "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law brought the woman to Jesus because they judged her to be a sinner, according to the law of Moses, and they wanted Jesus to condemn her. But Jesus extended grace to her, not condemnation. He recognized the sin, but he did so in a way that she was able to acknowledge the truth of her own sinfulness.

I had a conversation many years ago with a friend and spiritual mentor who was divorced. Divorce was and is a troubling issue for me, and on that sunny afternoon by the pool I said to her, "Help me understand that you are divorced." She looked at me and with tears in her eyes said, "It's sin." No excuses; no alibis. She did not hesitate to acknowledge the truth of her situation.

As I reflect on my early years growing up in the Mennonite church, I am aware of a strong sense of being under the law. I knew it was important to be obedient and to get it right so that I would not be condemned. Sinners were the other folks that didn't get it right.

It is important to live faithfully and obediently; discipleship is immensely important. But I dare never lose sight of the truth that I am a sinner, desperately in need of God's grace. And I can never experience God's grace until I acknowledge the truth that I am a sinner. Grace that does not first acknowledge the truth that I am a sinner is no grace at all. No one can experience God's grace until there is first an admission of sin. Our inability as Mennonites to acknowledge and confess sin in our lives continues to make it difficult for so many of us to experience and live in God's abundant grace.

Our inability as Mennonites to acknowledge and confess sin in our lives continues to make it difficult for so many of us to experience and live in God's abundant grace.

Jesus came to free us from the law with its demands and condemnation; the law is no match for sin. Grace and truth, on the other hand, make sure sin does not have the last word. Paul said to the Romans, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace …" (3:23-24a).

And let me hasten to add that the grace and truth that came in Jesus do not disregard sin. The truth that I am a sinner is not a license to live sinfully. On the contrary, the truth that I am a sinner keeps me on my knees at the foot of the cross. That posture and location is not a likely setting from which to issue condemnation. It is a wonderful place from which to invite others to the truth and the grace that comes through Jesus Christ.

Martha Kolb-Wyckoff is on the pastoral team of Waterford Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

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Gordon Houser

Happy New Year

[In Christian revelation] the historical embodies the metaphysical.—Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*

This past Sunday, Nov. 22, was Christ the King Sunday, the final Sunday of the Christian year. Historically it focuses on the sovereignty of the Lord and serves as a transition into Advent (Latin, "coming"), during which we look forward to the coming of the King.

A major part of God's revelation to humanity concerns our relationship with time. Do we pay attention? In Genesis 1 the creation of the world is marked by days. The fourth commandment calls God's people to imitate God by setting aside a day of rest, a Sabbath.

One of the first unique practices of the early church was to designate the first day of each week for remembering Jesus' death and resurrection. The Epistle of Barnabas calls Sunday "an eighth day, that is the beginning of another world ... in which Jesus also rose from the dead." Early Christians saw the new age of the Spirit as an eighth day of creation, when God is creating anew (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Christian calendar is designed as a re-enactment of the life of Jesus. Forming our worship and daily prayers to fit the seasons of the Christian year helps us reflect on the life of Jesus.

In A.D. 321, Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor, made "the day of the sun" on the Roman calendar a holiday and ordered all businesses to close on that day.

What the New Testament calls "the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10) became the foundation for the Christian calendar. By the end of the fourth century, the Christian year was complete, according to *The New Handbook of the Christian Year* (Abingdon, 1992). And though differences among Christian groups remain, particularly between the Western (Catholic and Protestant) and Eastern (Orthodox) churches, the basic elements of the Christian year—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost—are not in dispute.

While Mennonite worship practices vary, most of us give greater credence and attention to the secular than to the Christian calendar. More of us say "Happy New Year" on Jan. 1 than on the first Sunday of Advent (Nov. 29 this year—oops, I mean next year).

Ultimately, when a year begins is arbitrary, yet how we mark our calendar, how we think about time, affects us. The calendar we tend to use comes from the Romans. January derives from Janus, the Roman god with two faces, one looking back and one looking forward. Our calendar marks the passage of time but says little more to us about its significance.

The Christian calendar, however, is designed as a re-enactment of the life of Jesus. Forming our worship and daily prayers to fit the seasons of the Christian year helps us reflect on the life of Jesus, from his birth in the Christmas season to his baptism at Epiphany, his suffering during Lent, his death and resurrection during Holy Week, culminating at Easter, which was the major feast of the early church, to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And during the days of "ordinary time"—from Pentecost to Advent—the lectionary helps us reflect on Jesus' works and teaching.

Ephesians 5:16 calls us to make "the most of the time, because the days are evil." This may refer primarily to using our time wisely, but let's also think differently about time and how we mark it. Let the rhythm of the Christian year infuse our worship, our prayers, our reflection on the life of Jesus, whom we seek to imitate.

Most of us mark a new year in various ways. We may purchase new datebooks and calendars to keep track of appointments. We may make resolutions about changes we wish to make in our lives in the coming year. We may even cook certain foods on New Year's Day. (My mother used to make corned beef on that day.)

Let's adopt practices for the beginning of the year on the Christian calendar. Let's make it a time of reflection on our lives and how they reflect Jesus' ways. Rather than partying a month or so later, let's celebrate the new Christian year by worshiping the coming King.—*gh*

No issue Dec. 1: The next regularly scheduled issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Dec. 8, 1998.

the Mennonite

December 8, 1998

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Money talks, values listen

It was good to see an actual news article, rather than just another news release, on the current capital fund-raising programs launched by four of our five church colleges ("Building up the Campuses," Nov. 10). According to my calculation, the total cost of these campaigns is nearly $75 million. We're talking about a lot of money.

Maybe it's time to cool our debate on some other weighty matters facing our merging denomination and consider the following: (1) How much more money and what kind of state-of-the-art facilities are needed to train Anabaptist students in the way of Jesus? (2) Could our five colleges agree to end their long-standing competition with each other and, under a new Mennonite board of education, plan for cooperative recruiting of students and joint efforts to reduce unnecessary duplication of programs and facilities? (3) Could we hear more from students and constituents opposed to spending this much on buildings and ask representative Mennonites from other parts of the globe to help us decide where some of these dollars should be spent?

When there is incongruence between the values of justice and compassion for the poor we preach with our words and the values we teach through a huge building program, the latter is likely to speak loudest and longest. —*Harvey Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Two countries, two church bodies

Suppose we dream about a world in which our churches are just as concerned about mission and justice as they are about worship and salvation. Further, suppose that in such a world the churches would want to speak to questions of life and health, would speak for the children and for tomorrow, for the environment. Who would speak to the Canadian government about foreign aid? Who would speak to the U.S. government about free trade zones and dignity and human rights? Often it has been the North American Mennonite conference. Would it not better be the Canadian or U.S. church bodies?

Much of our worship can cross boundaries quite easily; often community can also cross boundaries. Most of our mission work is done best if we start with where and how we live. Mission, within our countries or beyond, is done best if there are clear and distinct U.S. and Canadian structures and identities. There are many wonderful ways of walking together, but we cannot, we should not even try to, forget who we are.—*Ray Hamm, Altona, Man.*

Continuing the debate

I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. The Bible is my guide for knowing what behavior pleases God and what is sin in God's eyes. I believe the Scriptures teach that homosexual behavior is sin before God.

As I read Mennonite periodicals, I discover that my beliefs make me a target of ridicule. From comments I've read in the past year, I shouldn't be able to "sleep at night" for holding such convictions. I lack "love" and am not "caring" for others. I'm guilty of "judgments and threats." I am guilty of "rejection" of people. I lack "integrity" and leave no "room for dialogue," no "space for conversation." I have "homophobia" and can't "understand a homosexual's relationship, nor do I want to understand it," and I'm guilty of "violence of exclusion." My discernment of Scripture makes me the bigger sinner because of "judging which sin is the more evil."

If the homosexuals and their supporters really live with the conviction that they are truly in the will of God, obedient to Scripture and fully at peace that heaven will be their eternal abode, it wouldn't be necessary to give those of us who hold the opposite conviction all those derogatory labels. In the meantime, I still understand that homosexuality is sin, but I will be open to the Scriptures to search me to see if I'm guilty of violence or hatred. I do not want any hatred in my heart to block anyone from the truth of the Scriptures and the gospel of Christ.—*Simon Schrock, Fairfax, Va.*

I see nothing in the Mennonite tradition that suggests we should ignore the authority of Scripture. The apostle Paul was quite clear in his use of homosexuality as an example of our fallenness in Romans 1. Yet it does not seem clear to me that we should reject active homosexuals from the church. What one believes about homosexuality does not determine what homosexuals' relationship with God is like. To require such uniformity of belief from laypeople is dogmatism at its worst. I was not required to take a stand on the issue when I was baptized. On the other hand, we should never leave behind our biblical stand on this issue either. We have a right to refuse to allow certain people to be placed into positions of leadership.

Also, how do those in the church who claim to know that homosexual activity is not wrong deal with homosexuals who agree with Paul? I have encountered such Christian homosexuals. The early Anabaptists died because they

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998—by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

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readers say

believed in the radical reality of the church of the New Testament. I am convinced they would not have supported the contemporary social movement which tells us that our sexual orientation should be the core of our identity, especially if we are homosexuals. Even though I am a heterosexual, I don't walk around on a daily basis telling people that I am straight. *—Samuel L. Sellars, Upland, Calif.*

I thank those wonderful people who wrote those beautiful letters on judging people's sexual preferences (Readers Say, Nov. 10). They have expressed themselves in a way that says how they feel without condemning or judging.

If God made us, can we be so bad? Each of us has to answer to God before we can take up residence in our home with him. So be careful—judge not lest ye be judged. See the good in all of God's creation and leave the judging where it belongs.*—Barbara Rosensteel, Hanover, Pa.*

The second will be evident

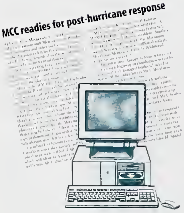
The Nov. 3 editorial ("Might the Second Be Like the First?") is based on the premise that many may miss the second coming of Christ, just as many did not recognize him as the Messiah when he first came to earth as a baby. Matthew 24:23-27, Mark 13:26 and Luke 17:23-24 all offer a direct contrast to the editorial. These passages assure us that we need not fear that we may fail to notice Christ's return. "For when I return, you will know it beyond all doubt. It will be as evident as the lightning that flashes across the skies" (Luke 17:24). Christ's coming will be unmistakably evident to everyone. The Bible warns us not to believe reports that Christ has returned. If we have to be told that the Messiah has come, then he has not.*—Carol J. Eisenbeis, Hurley, S.D.*

Cover photo
by Paul M. Schrock

Kudos and commendations

I've been meaning to tell you since the first issue: The new publication is great! I like the semiglossy paper, the texture, the title, but most of all I enjoy, appreciate and am challenged and provoked by the content. It's exciting to turn the first page of each issue and read of our denomination's involvement in country after country—including our own. That's why I'm puzzled each time I read a letter that accuses you of not publishing more articles "based on the Scriptures." Isn't going out into the world (whether it's next door or the next hemisphere) to help, to build, to teach, to just be a sister or brother to others what Scripture is all about? Thanks again for putting something in my mailbox that has much more to offer than bills and coupons.—*Audrey A. Metz, Sarasota, Fla.*

I write partly to raise the level of Canadian participation and partly to commend you for the excellent presentations in *The Mennonite.* Issues such as you are consistently raising, from Ron Sider's "Jesus Must Weep" (Aug. 25) to "A Holy Nation" by Lois Barrett (Oct. 27), need our undivided attention. As the Christian community, we ignore them at our peril. Keep up the good work.—*John Loewen, Saskatoon*


MCC readies for post-hurricane response

Computing disasters

It did me good to see in the Nov. 10 issue of *The Mennonite* the coverage of Hurricane Mitch and the planned response by Mennonite Central Committee. It was equally encouraging to hear in church about the many outreaches of Mennonite Disaster Service. It made me wonder, though: Are we simply responding to disasters, or are we assisting in planning and prevention to reduce the risks people are exposed to? It is one thing to take blankets after the storm to the man who built his house on the sand. It is quite another to instruct and guide him to build on the rocky places.

If we feel it is prudent to plan to be prepared for natural disasters, then how much more prudent to plan for man-made ones? I am referring to the computer problems we may encounter come the year 2000. I do not want to cry fire in a full theater, but I think that we must all accept that we should be prepared for some changes in the new millennium. At least ask the questions of your support structures—utilities, phone company, city, school, supermarket—where they are at risk and how they plan to handle it. God will see us through this fiery furnace as well, provided we have been wise stewards with what God has entrusted to us.—*Bob Lightfoot, Corning, N.Y.*

French connection

There is an unfortunate historical cart before the horse in the article "Oldest Mennonite Church in Paris Turns 40" (Nov. 17). The congregation was deeply planted in the grass-roots peace evangelism of Mme. Sommermeyer and Mennonite Board of Missions workers Orley and Jane Swartzendruber, who held Bible studies starting in 1954. A congregational covenant was made, along with baptisms, in 1956. In 1961, after eight years of evangelism and congregational life, there emerged under Robert Witmer's leadership a congregation-sponsored ministry among late adolescents with mental disabilities. It is a matter of record and of missiological importance that the latter ministry existed and ultimately flowered only because of those deep roots in the one-anothering life of a vital connection.—*David A. Shank, Sturgis, Mich.*

God bless radio ministry

I was very pleased to see the Far East Broadcasting Co. ad in the Oct. 13 issue. FEBC has been broadcasting the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Far East for more than 50 years. Only eternity will reveal the many number of souls that have been won to our Lord Jesus Christ through FEBC's radio ministry. God bless FEBC.—*Louise Swartzendruber, Glendale, Ariz.*

Pontius' Puddle

by Joel Kauffmann

... AND SO, GOD, GIVE ME A COOL WATCH, SOME HOT SNEAKERS, AND A REALLY SWANKY SWEATER!
AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON ROLLS AROUND, I ABANDON INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR ACCESSORY PRAYER!
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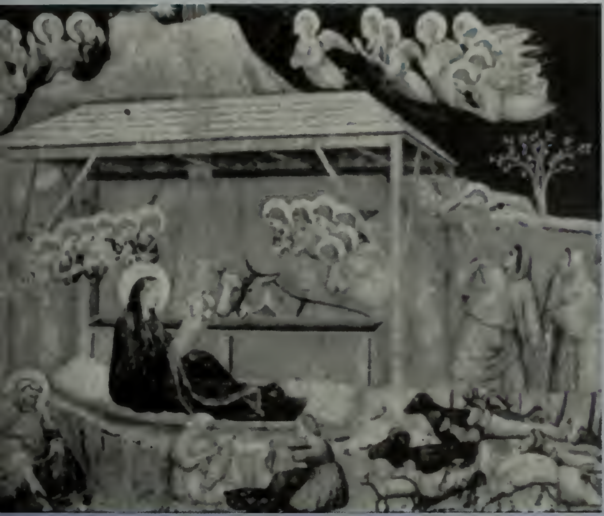
Correction: Alfred E. Sauer's letter in the Nov. 24 issue of *The Mennonite* should have included a reference to 2 Peter 3:7,10,13, not 1 Peter as published.

Family portrait

by Ann Hostetler



La Nativité de L'Enfant Jésus by Giotto di Bondone, from *Catalogue of Colour Reproductions of Paintings Prior to 1860*

In Giotto's *Nativity*
angels and shepherds look
outward or upward,
while the swaddled
newborn holds his head up
to peer into his mother's eyes.
Who sees the other more clearly—the serene
reclining mother an intimate arm's length
from God? Or her son
whose perfectly formed doll's face
welcomes the eyes of the one
who brought him forth from her body?
Already he knows her labor pains, her joy
at his head crowning between
her legs, the weary journey. Her centuries'
worn blue robe, crumbling and translucent,
joins her to the almost sleeping Joseph
folded in a fetal squat
beside the clustered rams.

Ann Hostetler lives in Goshen, Ind.

Advent reflections

In our little church, we look at most things from the underside of the weaving. We hang on to whatever we can glimpse of God's movements on the underside of history.

The ligh in the darkness

by Sue C. Steiner

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.—John 1:5 TEV

The week before Advent at women's Bible study, Delores blurts out, "I'm just not looking forward to Christmas this year."

In a quiet moment she explains why. Her junior high-aged son has only one request for Christmas. All he wants is a new mattress, to replace the lumpy one with the springs coming through. But Delores is on social assistance. She can't afford a new mattress for her son this month. There's not much the women's Bible study group can do. But we listen to Delores' pain.

Our Advent banner declares, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."

The first week in Advent at women's Bible study, Deborah apologetically asks us to pray once again for her health.

She's had another diabetic reaction—this one on the street. Three "guardian angels" took on flesh and came and ministered to her, Deborah says. The first one propped her up, the second one knew where she lived, and the third one called an ambulance. The paramedics administered glucose.

Our Advent banner proclaims, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."

The second week in Advent, Diane stops by my office door. She hasn't put her tree up yet, she says. She doesn't know if she's going to. There's little to put under it for her three girls. The older two understand that Mom needs to save money from her social assistance check to buy a car to benefit all of them. But the younger one wants the $50 toys advertised on television. Diane finds the mall where she does most of her shopping depressing.

Jesus is the light for us and for the whole world. When we go into the dark with him, we can be safe … we can find light we didn't know was there. We can calm our fears.

—Delilah

Our Advent banner promises, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."

The third week in Advent, Donna asks me if there are swimming pools in Waterloo where a person can spend some time during the day, take a shower and buy a little something to eat. She thinks she's going to become a drifter soon, she says, and hostels are getting too expensive.

Our Advent banner still proclaims, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."

During Advent I read a children's book to my congregants at Black Creek Faith Community. It's called *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* In this book, Big Bear tries to counter Little Bear's fear of the dark by putting bigger and bigger lanterns by Little Bear's bed in the Bear Cave. But Little Bear rightly notes that outside the Bear Cave there's still lots and lots of scary dark.

Finally Big Bear picks up Little Bear and with sturdy arms carries Little Bear out into the scary dark. "Look at the dark, Little Bear. … I've brought you the moon, Little Bear. … The bright yellow moon and all the twinkly stars." But Little Bear has fallen asleep, safe in Big Bear's arms.

We talk in our tiny congregation about what the dark is for us and what it might mean to go into it safely. We speak of fragile health, of the impending implementation of workfare in Ontario, of the dearth of real entry-level jobs, of the violence young people sometimes face in schools and elsewhere.

Delilah, our oldest member, assures us that "Jesus is the light for us and for the whole world. When we go into the dark with him, we can be safe … we can find light we didn't know was there. We can calm our fears." Delilah is trying to maintain her own apartment again, after being hospitalized and then living with a granddaughter.

And through it all, our Advent banner continues to proclaim, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."

These words on our banner finish off the

shines

first stanza of a beautiful poem, one that threads its way through eternity and time from the beginning until now. The poem effortlessly weaves together such disparate images as the Word, the act of creation, life, light and God-in-Christ. Mostly I've absorbed this poem in lofty settings, such as a liturgical candlelight service at 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve. In that setting, it's easy to admire the poem as an intricate piece of weaving. It's also relatively easy to give assent to the proclamation while stuffing the pain in our lives and ignoring the pain in our world.

But in our little church the pain is out in the open. In our little church we look at most things from the underside of the weaving. We hang on to whatever we can glimpse of God's movements on the underside of history.

In our little church we are blessed with the gift of forthrightness. We quickly get down to basics. We develop a keen eye for when justice is not being done. We pray for strength to cope each day. We try not to let fear of coming changes immobilize us.

We nourish our fragile community with a thrift shop, coffee and cookies, friendship and prayer. Sometimes we can be heard to say, "Well, when it comes down to it, I do have everything I need—food, a roof over my head, God in my life, friends."

And on the fourth Sunday of Advent, more of us than usual will gather in the rec room of the 20-story apartment building where most of us live. We will sing carols. We will ask young parents Donnie and Darlene to stand over there by the gym set with this year's Baby Jesus (who happens to be a girl). We will listen to the Christmas story from Luke 2.

As we light the Advent candles, we will all say together, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out." And at the end, when we each light our own little white candle and sing, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come," we will believe it.

At the time this was written, Sue C. Steiner served as interim pastor of the Black Creek Faith Community (Mennonite) in Toronto, an emerging congregation in the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada.

The house of bread

by Marilyn Black Phemister

God sent his son
to Bethlehem, House of Bread.
What better place
for the birth of Immanuel,
the gift of wheat, a kernel
of life, sown to die
his body living
bread to be broken
for all?

Marilyn Black Phemister lives in Larned, Kan.

Advent reflections

A bleating goat and incarnation

by Jim Cessna

The only way to help her find the peace she desperately bleated and banged for was to leave my room and go to her as a goat. I couldn't do it, but that's what it would take. That's incarnation.

A short stay in a village is part of every Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker's introduction to Nigeria. So after a few days in Nigeria, Carolyn, my wife, and I were driven to the village of Gawarza to spend a week with Pastor Kefas, Persisa, his wife, and their five children. How different from our life in North America: no television, telephone, electricity, tap water, flush toilet, automobiles or anything else we Westerners consider essential.

The whole village adopted us. People stopped by early each morning to ensure we had spent the night well and to say they were going to be working in their fields all day—just in case we missed them. In the evening many crowded into our living room while we ate new, exciting foods by the light of a bush lamp. We talked about our lives and they about theirs, and we all laughed and smiled.

We slept in a room at the back of the compound with chickens, dogs and goats just outside our door. We were all supposed to sleep, but one she-goat didn't get the message. She had given birth to two babies a few weeks earlier and for some reason they had died. That goat bleated all night for her babies. Even worse, she seemed convinced her babies were in our room, so she constantly banged her head against our door. All night, every night, she bleated and banged as she looked for her babies, for comfort, for answers, hoping that whatever was behind our door might bring her peace.

I could tell her that I cared about her and that her well-being mattered to me. I could even open our door for her. And I tried. I tried speaking to her in English, even in broken Hausa, the local language. I tried firm discipline and pastoral counseling, but nothing brought her peace. The only way to help her find the peace she desperately bleated and banged for was to leave my room and go to her as a goat. I couldn't do it, but that's what it would take. That's incarnation.

Humankind, like that miserable she-goat, has forever been bleating and banging. Lost and confused, we have banged our heads against every door imaginable, hoping to find peace, hoping to fill the God-shaped vacuum within us. All with no avail. God alone can help us. God alone knows the answers to our grief. God alone knows the questions. God alone can open his door that leads to peace. And God does it by coming to us as one of us. That's incarnation. That's Christmas.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be held on to but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Jesus not only opens the door to peace, but he is that door. That's incarnation. That's Christmas.

Jesus, God incarnate, said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). Jesus sends us to be him—not to goats but to each other. That, too, is incarnation. This Christmas may we, in the power of the incarnate Son of God, incarnate him to others as instruments of his peace.

MCC worker Jim Cessna teaches at Gindiri College of Theology near Jos, Nigeria. He is from Boulder, Colo., and was pastor at Open Door Fellowship in Denver.

This little event of Jesus' visit may not mean much to some, but it is significant to us. Our Lord came to earth because he loved us.

Mom's visit

by Bob Buxman

My mom loves me. You may say, She has to; she's your mom. You're right, but it's more than that. She likes me. It's not like we're buddies, go to baseball games together or slap each other on the back.

Mom is 83, a Mennonite, quite conservative. I'm 53. Still, we have a special relationship. This is because she came to visit me.

I live in Nicaragua, the second poorest country in the Americas, with more guns and slums per capita than almost anyplace. Retired folks don't talk about Nicaragua as the place you've just got to go to on your next vacation. Besides, my mom is not a big traveler. But she came to visit me, in Nicaragua. What a mom!

She ate food sold by a street vendor: deep-fried, golden-brown, mashed yucca scoops placed in a banana leaf with honey poured over them, offered by a smiling 12-year-old girl. Mom rode in a horse-drawn cart. She ate in the humble homes of poor country people. She smiled, laughed and wished she spoke Spanish.

Perturbed at the poverty and troubled by the injustices she saw, my mother asked hard questions. She did lots of things foreign to her California culture. Best of all, she arrived carrying only a bag a little larger than a purse—and she stayed a week.

She left with a better understanding of my work in Nicaragua.

This may not mean much to some, but it's significant to me. My mom came to Nicaragua, to visit *me*, because she loves *me*.

As I thought about my mom's visit, I realized it's not unlike Christ coming to earth. Compared to what he left, earth was probably no paradise to visit. It was not like many people cared one way or the other whether or not he came. Some did, of course.

He got involved with people and ate their food, rode donkeys, laughed with families and walked with them. He also noticed the children. He traveled light. He experienced much of what it means to be a traveler on this earth: love, anger, frustrations, hunger, betrayal, beatings, acceptance, rejection, exhaustion, laughter, hope, disappointment, contentment, prayer and moms.

This little event of Jesus' visit may not mean much to some, but it is significant to us. Our Lord came to earth because he loved us.

Maybe this little event also says something about how we are to be there for others.

Bob Buxman and Barb, his wife, were Mennonite Central Committee country representatives in Costa Rica and Nicaragua for 12 years. In November they took the position of directors of MCC U.S. West Coast programs.

MCC photo by Emily Will

Foreign to California culture: Keila Alfaro Oyes, 8 (left), and friend Reina Espinoza Torres, 9, shuck corn at the home of Keila's grandmother in Savana Grande, Nicaragua.

Tisha Lozano Design

Movies & films

Resisting unbearable lightness

by Gordon Houser

Any film we watch affects us, for good or ill, and we need to think about it.

You put down $7 (or whatever it costs in your town) to see a movie. Maybe you pay another $5 for popcorn and a drink. If you've hired a babysitter, you're paying another $5 to $10, not counting what it costs to drive to the theater. What are you paying for? Is it worth it?

Even if you go to the cheaper matinee or wait to see it on video, you're investing a couple of hours to watch image on a screen. For what purpose? Do you simply want a break, to focus on something other than your daily grind? Do you want some excitement in your life, even—or especially—if it is vicarious? Or do you enter that theater or give your attention to that screen with the hope—or the risk—that what follows may change your life?

In early November, I attended the fifth City of the Angels Film Festival, held this year at the Directors of America Theatres in Los Angeles. This festival brought together filmmakers, scholars, writers, artists, students and members of the religious community, including at least one Mennonite. It was not, according to festival chair Ron Austin, "for indiscriminate movie fans and celebrity groupies." It was a place, in other words, to consider and interact with films, not just to watch movies.

In a little more than three days I viewed 12 of the 20 films shown (see box on page 12). I'm still processing their effect on my life, but I know they affected me, which needs to be the assumption of anyone who looks at film. Anything we watch affects us, for good or ill, and we need to think about it.

I came to the festival as a participant in a conference on religion and film sponsored by *Image*, a journal of art and religion (see box on page 11). *Image* was one of several groups participating in the festival. This conference included lectures by cultural critics Gil Bailie, Sven Birkerts and Patricia Hampl, plus a workshop on "The Jesus Movies as Gospels" and six scholarly papers on the conference's theme, "Screening Mystery: the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Film."

In his lecture, Birkerts borrowed a phrase from Milan Kundera, "the unbearable lightness of being," to describe the malaise of many. He said the glut of media today contributes to a collective consciousness. Using an admittedly arbitrary distinction between movies and films, he called movies entertainment, part of a collective, a lightness of being that occurs when experience is mediated for us. On the other hand, he said, films are "art that is not pitched to the collective self but to the individual part of the self."

In his book *The Gutenberg Elegies*, Birkerts writes that "what distinguishes us as a species is not our technological prowess but ... our extraordinary ability to confer meaning on our

Photofest

Self-sacrifice: Emily Watson in *Breaking the Waves*

experience and to search for clues about our purpose from the world around us." What he calls movies simply present us with a mediated experience—a car chase, a love story, a funny scene—but do not invite viewers to explore the meaning behind the experience, which is the objective of films.

The "culture speed" around us, Birkerts said in his lecture, separates us from reality and leaves us feeling irrationally anxious while waiting at a traffic light. As we try to do many things at once, we experience "the mushy, mostly pleasurable blur of daily living." In this context, "freedom has come to mean no more responsibility for those who live around us," he said. We live in our electronic cocoons with the illusion of reality, while the world becomes less substantial and more of an idea.

Films and other art forms entice us back to reality, to the interaction of others' experiences and our own. Those shown at the festival fit this description. We entered various worlds, from 15th-century France in *The Passion of Joan of Arc* to 15th-century Russia in *Andrei Rublev* to Berlin in the late 1980s in *Wings of Desire* to contemporary Holiness churches in *The Apostle*.

The various films at the festival forced me—and continue to force me—to look at my life. Whether it's the words and example of a modern saint in *Mother Teresa*, of contemporary monks in *Trappist*, of the village of Le Chambon during World War II in *Weapons of the Spirit* or the Spanish priest in *Nazarín*, I felt challenged.

The most affecting film for me, if I had to choose one, was Andrei Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*, a three-hour epic portrayal of the religious icon painter in Russia. The director recreates the past in all its dirty, violent and frightening reality, yet he tells the story with a visual poetry that mixes beauty and horror, innocence and evil. One theme of the film is the suffering and persistence of the artist. We see this not only in the title character, who witnesses the destruction of people and churches by the invading Tartars, but in a boy who pretends to know how to make a large bell and is overcome by grace when he succeeds.

At the end of a showing of each of the seven featured films at the festival, a panel (different for each film) discussed the film's merits and panel members' reactions to it, then opened the discussion to the audience. Of all the films, *Breaking the Waves* by Danish filmmaker Lars von Trier received the most passionate audience reaction.

Set on an island off the coast of Scotland, the film tells about Bess (Watson), who belongs to a strict (to put it mildly) religious sect. She marries an outsider, a worker from an offshore oil rig who doesn't agree with the harsh, staid ways of the church and stays away. When an accident on the rig leaves him paralyzed, Bess becomes convinced that she must sacrifice herself for him to be healed.

The panelists uniformly lauded it as a work of art, what one panelist called "a melodrama about faith, hope and love." But the audience, for the most part, responded negatively. One man said, "The most dysfunctional character in the film is God." Another said the female protagonist, played magnificently by Emily Watson, "clearly is suffering from mental illness." To see such a brutish, senseless sacrifice as good, said a woman in the audience, is abhorrent.

The interaction between a viewer and a film includes one's emotions, intellect and at times one's deeply held beliefs.

Von Trier mixes a grainy realism with a fairy tale format. The panelists felt he kept a

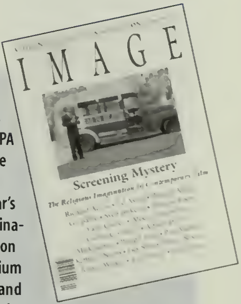


Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion is published quarterly for $30 per year by the Center for Religious Humanism, 323 S. Broad St., P.O. Box 674, Kennett Square, PA 19348. Edited by Gregory Wolfe, it began in 1992. Each issue includes fiction, poetry, essays, visual art, an interview and reviews. The latest issue is devoted to the theme of this year's annual conference, "Screening Mystery: the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Film." This issue includes a conversation with Horton Foote; a screenplay by Diane Glancy; a symposium with Kathleen Norris, Sven Birkerts, Ed Asner, Arthur Hiller and others, plus essays by Gil Bailie, Ronald Austin, Michael Morris, John R. May and J.A. Hanson.—*gh*

City of the Angels booklet

The meaning and efficacy of suffering: a scene from *Nazarín*

Interact with whatever you watch, talk about it with friends, how you feel about it, what it is trying to say.

good balance between the two, while the audience seemed to feel the realistic elements outweighed the other to such an extent that the supernatural ending, with heavenly bells tolling their affirmation of Bess's act, rang (no pun intended) false. Either way, only a well-made film would garner such feelings. A lesser film, a movie, let us say, would have only been scorned.

The interaction between a viewer and a film includes one's emotions, intellect and at times one's deeply held beliefs. Movies tend to treat this interaction superficially, entertaining the viewer with images and dialogue that invite consumption but little contemplation. Films, on the other hand, demand attention, assume thoughtful consideration and threaten to change how people view the world. They reward further viewing, since more than one level of meaning is presented.

A case in point is Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*, which I saw for the second time. The film explores the philosophical threads of humanity in angels and divinity in humans. As one panelist noted, the film was inspired by Rilke's poetry, and much of the dialogue is poetic. Another panelist said that "in this film Wenders looks at seeing; it's a film about filmmaking." What struck me this time in a new way was the setting of Berlin, which I first visited last year. Made before the Berlin Wall came down, *Wings* offers a miniature history of Berlin. It also attempts to show what cannot be seen, the dilemma of all filmmakers.

I had not before seen *Nazarín* by Luis Buñuel, a 1958 Spanish-language film. When it was praised by the Catholic Church, Buñuel called it "a confused reaction." He wanted to shock audiences and meant to criticize the church. The film presents a powerful portrait of a priest who tries to follow Jesus but runs into trouble—not unlike Jesus. The two women who are his faithful followers broaden our feminist consciousness without being didactic. Most poignantly, *Nazarín* explores the meaning and efficacy of suffering.

Many, perhaps most, of these films are not available at your local video store, so I can't simply recommend that you see them, though I do. And I don't mean to sound elitist, to imply that you should like these films or you're not with it. I want only to raise this question in your mind, before you plunk down your hard-earned money at the cinema: What effect will this film have on me, on my perspective of the world? Do I want to watch a movie like *The Siege* with its foolish stereotype of Arab Americans? And if I do, will I at least raise questions about not only the truth of the movie's perspective but its possible effect?

Further, I don't mean to imply that watching films should not be fun, that only an artsy film with subtitles qualifies as worth watching. But I do encourage you to interact with whatever you watch, talk about it with friends, how you feel about it, what it is trying to say. Otherwise, you (we) float along with a million others in an unbearable lightness.

Gordon Houser is associate editor for features of The Mennonite.

Books about film

- *Seeing Through the Media: A Religious View of Communications and Cultural Analysis* by Michael Warren (Trinity Press, 1997)
- *Explorations in Theology and Film*, edited by Clive Marsh and Gaye Ortiz (Blackwell, 1997)
- *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies* by Margaret R. Miles (Beacon Press, 1996)

Featured films:

The Passion of Joan of Arc, directed by Carl Dreyer
Andrei Rublev, directed by Andrei Tarkovsky
Jesus of Montreal, directed by Denys Arcand
The Apostle, directed by Robert Duvall
Wings of Desire, directed by Wim Wenders
Breaking the Waves, directed by Lars von Trier
Nazarín, directed by Luis Buñuel

Documentaries and shorts:

Weapons of the Spirit by Pierre Sauvage
Trappist by Robert G. Maier
The Field Afar: Bangkok by Gayla Jamison
Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky by Michal Leszczylowski
Mother Teresa by Ann and Jeannette Petrie
Bernardin by Martin Doblmeier and Frank Frost
Visas and Virtues by Chris Tashima
Tranceformer by Stig Bjorkman

Angelus Award entries (student films):

The Search for Martin Frye by David Tlapek
The Shooter by Alla Baeva
Tyger, Tyger by Timothy Cox
Pavel's Chariot by Michael Stahl
god@heaven by Joseph Neulight

General boards approve consultation to address membership, homosexuality before St. Louis 99

WINNIPEG—The contentiousness of homosexuality and membership in the new Mennonite Church dissolved into a prayerful search for the Holy Spirit's leading as a proposal for a consultation on the issue was approved by the general boards of the three integrating bodies at their Nov. 19-21 meetings in Winnipeg.

But the consultation, to be held in March 1999, may be the last, best hope to address disagreements that have threatened to derail the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC).

"Part of our desire [for the consultation] is our belief that we have not turned over every stone in search for that common ground," said GC General Board member Jim Harder, one of three people who drafted the proposal.

The tensions over church membership ran throughout the meetings, which were the first joint gatherings of the GC, MC and CMC general boards. The tensions were defused at Nov. 20 evening caucuses of the U.S. members on the GC and MC boards and of the Canadian board members. At the U.S. caucus, three groups, including members opposed to congregations accepting noncelibate homosexuals and members trying to find ways to accommodate those congregations, independently brought calls for a final concerted effort to find resolution before next summer's St. Louis delegate assemblies. The consultation idea was also welcomed in the Canadian caucus.

"I don't think it is anything other than the leading of the Spirit," said David Schroeder, a member of the Membership Committee, which has refused to tackle directly the issue of homosexuality and first floated the idea of an arena to address membership and homosexuality.

The committee had originally proposed that all current GC, MC and CMC congregations be granted membership in the new Mennonite Church but that area conferences be able to discipline congregations as they see fit. The committee is now in the process of revising its proposed membership guidelines.

The day after the country caucuses, the consultation proposal was passed by the GC, MC and CMC general boards with two dissenting votes. The consultation is to be organized by a group appointed by the GC-MC-CMC joint executive committee. Consultation participants should include representatives from the three general boards, all area conferences, associate groups and integration-related committees, according to the proposal. It called for "differing perspectives" on the issue to be represented. The proposal also calls for the consultation to be led by a conciliation expert. Date and location have yet to be determined.

"Pray that when we come together, we can do much greater things than we can do individually," said MC General Board member Donella Clemens, who helped draft the proposal.

The consultation is not intended to revisit whether homosexual sexual activity is sin, as currently stated by several church documents, such as the GC Saskatoon '86 and MC Purdue '87 statements on sexuality. Rather, those documents are to be the consultation's starting point, as noted in the proposal's preamble. Also included in the preamble is the "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love" statement adopted at the 1995 GC and MC assemblies in Wichita, Kan.

While the consultation proposal helped cap the growing discontent over noncelibate homosexuals in the church, meeting participants seemed to hold no illusions that a two-day meeting in March would satisfactorily resolve for everyone an issue that has been growing in the past two decades. "I'm attracted to this action because I don't know what else to do," said MC General Board member Joe Longacher.

MC General Board member James Smith, one of those calling for a consultation, urged that a decision on homosexuality and church membership be reached before the St. Louis assembly. "It's time to stop circling the wagons and time to move forward," he said.

At least five MC area conferences have intimated or stated outright that they will not go along with integration if denominational membership guidelines allow for including congregations that accept noncelibate homosexuals as members. Among those conferences is Lancaster, the largest area conference, whose bishop board has taken action that they will not join the new church if the Membership Committee's current guidelines are adopted.

"The membership issue is critically important," said Ruth Martin of the CMC General Board. "It feels like integration will come apart if we don't deal with this issue."—*Rich Preheim with Margaret Loewen Reimer*

Membership: Looking for alternatives

The General Conference Mennonite Church structure says congregations can be members of the denomination or an area conference or both. That could provide a solution for membership in the new denomination for congregations that accept noncelibate homosexuals as members, says Ervin Stutzman, Lancaster Conference's representative on the Mennonite Church General Board.

"When there are tensions in an area conference, you don't have to be a member of an area conference; you can be a member of the General Conference," Stutzman says. "Or if you have tensions with the General Conference, you join an area conference."

A consultation on homosexuality and membership will be held in March 1999. Membership Committee member David Schroeder says that can produce yet another solution. "I think the Spirit can lead us in a way we don't see yet," he says.—*Rich Preheim*

Boards approve plan to pay integration bills

WINNIPEG—The bill for integration is coming due for the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC).

To pay their shares of the $250,000 expected to be outstanding after receiving contributions, grants and other funding, the General Conference Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada will use reserve funds, while the Mennonite Church will first turn to its area conferences. The integration budget totals $636,000 and covers activities from September 1997 to July 1999.

Of the $250,000, the Mennonite Church needs to raise 47.5 percent, or $118,750; the General Conference Mennonite Church, 40 percent, or $100,000; and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 12.5 percent, or $31,250. The GC, MC and CMC general boards approved the plan during their Nov. 19-21 meetings in Winnipeg.

The formula was determined by splitting costs evenly between the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, then dividing again according to the percentage of Canadians in GC and MC memberships. The CMC portion was halved because Canadians make both GC and MC contributions.

The General Conference Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada will pay their share from undesignated bequests. The MC area conferences will be asked to make above-budget contributions based on their memberships. Recognizing that conference giving will likely not cover the bill, the MC General Board will solicit the difference—not to exceed 50 percent of the total—from the MC program boards plus the General Board.

The remainder of the budget is expected to be covered by other sources. Mennonite Mutual Aid has committed to $284,300 in subsidies and matching grants. Other funding sources include Schowalter Foundation, church reserves and private donations. For integration costs not covered by outside sources, General Conference Mennonite Church has been paying out of cash reserves as a loan to the merger process.—*Rich Preheim*

Aiden Schlichting Enns

While Mennonite Church moderator-elect Del Glick looks on, General Conference Mennonite Church assistant moderator Bernie Wiebe speaks at the joint meeting of the GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada general boards held Nov. 19-21 in Winnipeg.

The financial costs of integration

The integration process' biggest expense has been the constituent survey conducted earlier this year—$72,375, according to budget figures for December 1997 to October 1998.

Nearly $312,000 was spent during that time, while income was about $61,000. Income and expenditures through July 1999 are each budgeted for $636,000.

The second greatest integration expenditure was $51,237 for an organizational analysis, followed by $32,803 for new periodical development, $32,394 for a series of regional meetings and $27,228 for Integration Committee meetings.—*Rich Preheim*

Members struggle with racial representation

WINNIPEG—Integration could be a regression for racial/ethnic participation in the new Mennonite Church if minority groups are not given representation at the top level of the denomination, a Native American representative has told a joint meeting of General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) general board members.

According to current proposals, the Executive Board of the U.S. body of the new church will be a leadership board, comprised of members chosen because of qualifications, rather than a representative board, whose members are sent by constituent groups. The latter is the model of the current GC, MC and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) general boards.

"I'd say this is a stepping back from where we've been. ... I feel we've been let down," Don Barnhill, the MC General Board representative for United Native Ministries, said at a caucus of U.S. board members during the GC, MC and CMC joint general boards meeting Nov. 19-21 in Winnipeg.

African-American Mennonite Association and Hispanic Mennonite Convention also have seats on the MC General Board. Racial/ethnic groups do not have representation on the GC board. Furthermore, not all Mennonites of color are formally organized into groups.

"What we're struggling with is to find a voice

Next steps emerge for merger process

Proposals planned for St. Louis delegates

WINNIPEG—Delegates to next summer's St. Louis convention can expect to take action on an Executive Board, delegate body and Constituency Leadership Council for the U.S. body of the new integrated church.

The plan was approved during the joint meetings of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) general boards in Winnipeg Nov. 19-21.

Delegate approval of the Executive Board (parallel to the current general boards), delegate body and Constituency Leadership Council would be "the primary vehicle to authorize" the next steps in the integration process. The CLC would be an advisory group made up of representatives from area conferences, racial/ethnic organizations and other groups.

The Executive Board, delegate body and CLC proposals, to be developed by the U.S. Country Committee, are part of a comprehensive project plan for guiding the next steps of integration. GC general secretary Jim Schrag was named to direct the plan through at least the April meeting of the GC, MC and CMC general boards.

While the new U.S. Executive Board, delegate body and CLC would be established at or shortly after the St. Louis convention, the comprehensive project plan sets 2001 as the goal for the complete development of integrated church programs.

The plan also calls for a congregational study process "for the new integrated Mennonite Church that helps forge a common identity." The study would be implemented after St. Louis 99 and coordinated with a plan to develop a missional identity for the church as proposed by the mission agencies of the merging groups.

Other measures in the comprehensive project plan are to:

- develop a slate of nominees for the new U.S. general board;
- revise current church bylaws for the creation of parallel U.S. and Canadian structures;
- plan for distribution of assets under current church structures.

The GC, MC and CMC board also approved recommendations to develop a vision for integration based on the "Vision: Healing and Hope" statement and develop a rationale for integration and the creation of two country church bodies. The recommendations, plus the comprehensive project plan, emerged out of a September meeting of church leaders held at Sioux Falls, S.D.—*Rich Preheim*

Aiden Schlichting Enns

Paul Klassen, assistant treasurer of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, eyes his shot during a game of crokinole. Crokinole game boards were set up for play during breaks in the joint meetings of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada general boards.

I'd say this is a stepping back from where we've been. ... I feel we've been let down.—*Don Barnhill*

for everyone, those organized and those not organized," said Donella Clemens, a member of the U.S. Country Committee, responsible for developing the U.S. structure of the new church.

The committee is proposing that 20 percent of the Executive Board be people of color, who are chosen by the Gifts Discernment Committee, or nominating committee.

"In the long term, it would be important that the Gifts Discernment Committee confer with the [racial/ethnic] groups," said MC General Board member Owen Burkholder.

In the short term, he suggested, perhaps those groups could name the candidates of color for the Executive Board.

MC General Board member Malinda Berry urged not picking board members solely as representatives of an organized racial group. Under such a system, "I would not be part of this [board]," said Berry, an African-American and one of four at-large members on the board.

"We can't talk about racial/ethnic groups as big monoliths," she said.

The U.S. Country Committee is also proposing the creation of a Constituent Leadership Council, to include racial/ethnic group representatives as well as representatives from the U.S. area conferences.
—*Rich Preheim*

In other action ...

During the joint meetings of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada general boards in Winnipeg Nov. 19-21:

- The boards approved holding the U.S. delegate assembly every two years, starting in 2001.
- The boards also approved providing an off-site location during next summer's St. Louis convention for the Supportive Congregations Network and the Brethren-Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns.
- The boards did not take action on a proposed logo for the integrated church but sent it back to the Integration Committee's Communication Task Force for possible further work.—*Rich Preheim*

Protesters risk punishment in SOA rally

COLUMBUS, Ga.—Lisa Martens crossed the line Nov. 21. And she says it was worth it, despite the risks of fines and imprisonment.

Martens, a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) member, was one of at least 51 people from Mennonite volunteer programs and schools who defied the law and entered military property during an annual demonstration against the U.S. Army's School of the Americas (SOA), located at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga. The demonstration drew 5,000 to 7,000 people, of which an estimated 2,350 crossed the line.

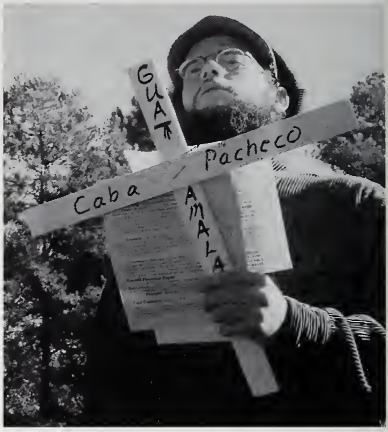
"It's so necessary to close that school … it's worthy of civil disobedience," Martens says. "That's how bad it is."

SOA trains Latin American soldiers, and opponents claim the school's graduates include more than 600 human rights abusers. The demonstration was held on the ninth anniversary of the killings of six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter in San Salvador, El Salvador. The United Nations later found that 17 of the 23 officers guilty of the massacre were SOA graduates.

Among those participating in the demonstration were about 150 people from CPT; Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind.; Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; Goshen (Ind.) College; and the Mennonite Voluntary Service unit in Washington.

Those who entered Fort Benning property were bussed off the site and ordered to stay away from the post for the rest of the day. More than 600 demonstrators were arrested last year, and about three dozen—including one Mennonite —received jail sentences.

"I went to the rally last fall and decided to go again," says Thomas Bona, a Goshen College senior from New York City. "Crossing the line was the next step of involvement. … Whatever the ramifications, God will provide a means for getting us through."



Grant Rissler

During a Nov. 21 demonstration at Fort Benning, Goshen (Ind.) College student Tim Godshall, a junior from Lancaster, Pa., holds a cross with the name of a Guatemalan allegedly killed by a Latin American soldier trained at the School of the Americas, located at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga.

Goshen student wins peace contest

For the third year in a row, a Goshen (Ind.) College student has taken top honors in the C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest.

Liz Lewis, a Goshen junior, won the contest with her speech "Why Do We Weep? A Portrait of Sexual Abuse." She called for ending sexual abuse in the church and home and appealed for compassion and understanding for victims.

Jay Brubaker, a Bluffton (Ohio) College senior, took second place with "Homosexuality and the Peace Witness." Third place went to Jennifer Stoll, a junior at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., who spoke on global conflict.

The contest, open to students at all North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ colleges, is administered by Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

In Burkina Faso, MCC health workers give mothers, babies a shot in the arm

PIELA, Burkina Faso—From underneath the meeting tree, the horn blew and the waiting began. After about an hour, 20 women came with their babies, and Sibdou Ouaba started her work.

"Since we have started our health lessons under the tree, more women bring their children here to the clinic for vaccinations and more timely treatment," says Ouaba, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-supported health worker.

Under the tree, Ouaba weighed the babies. Twelve weighed within the normal range, six were underweight, two had not grown in the previous four weeks and one had lost weight. Ouaba then talked at length about nutrition and preventing diarrhea.

Ouaba and other local health workers travel monthly to surrounding villages to chart babies' growth and teach women about caring for their children and other health lessons, such as disease prevention and the importance of vaccinations. MCC covers the costs of the work.

"In the past, few children were vaccinated," Ouaba says. "And mothers would delay getting medical care for their children until the children were very ill."

Last year, Ouaba, MCC worker Wendy Fuscoe and government and local health workers traveled to surrounding villages to encourage stopping female circumcision, a common practice in Africa and the Middle East.
—Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker of MCC News Service

MEDA conventiongoers remember storm victims; speaker criticizes global financial system

DALLAS, Texas—While they came to Dallas to learn more about business, life and faith, the 343 people at the annual Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) convention Nov. 12-15 offered their prayers and money for victims of Hurricane Mitch.

More than $70,000 was raised at a convention auction, half of which will be used to assist hurricane victims in Nicaragua. The remainder of the auction proceeds will be used for MEDA programs around the world.

The money for hurricane victims will go to MEDA's Nicaragua Reconstruction Fund, which will provide $640,000 in assistance in that country. Of that amount, $25,000 will be used for workshop rehabilitation, $400,000 for housing loans, $200,000 for additional lending capital and $15,000 for road repairs.

Although most of MEDA's programs were spared the brunt of Hurricane Mitch, many clients lost homes, workshops, inventory and raw materials; farmers belonging to MEDA's marketing assistance program lost between 50 percent and 70 percent of their bean crop.

Providing disaster assistance isn't usual for MEDA, which focuses primarily on microcredit, marketing, and business and technical training programs for entrepreneurs in the developing world.

"But the needs of our clients are so great, we have to help," says Allan Sauder, who directs MEDA's international programs. "Some people are left only with their bare hands; everything is gone."

In addition to the auction, convention participants were told that in the past year $6.4 million had been lent to 8,000 clients in eight countries, that more than 800,000 trees were planted in Haiti and that a new $2.1 million rural marketing program is helping 2,000 Bolivian families strengthen their farm operations. Participants also heard that MEDA's first North American job creation program, in Lancaster, Pa., has seen 126 businesses started or strengthened and 183 jobs created since starting in 1993. Similar programs based on this model are beginning or being considered in five other U.S. cities.

In one of the convention keynote addresses, Art DeFehr criticized the global financial system, blaming it for today's "world without pity."

"There was a time when most people with capital owned some real assets they could see and be identified with, such as my furniture factory in my own community," said DeFehr, president of Palliser Furniture in Winnipeg.

But now, he said, the world is a place where the people making decisions about the economy of many countries aren't connected to the people in those countries.

"When Adam Smith talked about the unseen hand of the marketplace being better than the heavy hand of government, he didn't have hedge funds and derivatives in mind," DeFehr said.

"Investors simply try to find the best poker player to play the game on their behalf," he said. "Do we have any idea what these people are doing with our money? Do we really feel good if our rate of return was based on a destructive bet against the currency of a small country and we won?"

Another speaker was advertising executive Keith Reinhard, who grew up Mennonite in Berne, Ind., and is responsible for some of North America's best-known ads ("You deserve a break today" and "Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun"). He said he submits his company's advertising to "tests for truth": "Does the consumer understand what is meant? Can the product actually deliver? Can I comfortably explain my decision to make an ad to my wife, kids and God?"—*John Longhurst of MEDA News Service*

> **When Adam Smith talked about the unseen hand of the marketplace being better than the heavy hand of government, he didn't have hedge funds and derivatives in mind.**
>
> —*Art DeFehr*

**Mennonite
Central
Committee**
Canada

Mennonite Central Committee Canada seeks applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is the chief executive officer of Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

All applicants must exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active membership in a Mennonite or Brethren in Christ church, and nonviolent peacemaking.

Please direct enquiries to Search Committee members:

John Wiens (chair) – (604) 434-5358
Pauline Hogan – (905) 688-0361
Willie Stoesz – (204) 377-4724
Ed Barkman – (204) 254-7734
Lori Unger Brandt – (204) 284-7881

Please direct applications to:

John Wiens
Executive Director Search Committee
c/o Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 5K9
Fax: (204) 269-9875

Review of applications will begin on January 31, 1999 and will continue until a suitable candidate is selected.

by the way ...

Sheryl K. Wyse of Harrisonburg, Va., in June became the first woman to chair the board of overseers of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg.

Peace commitment slipping, leaders fear

WINNIPEG—Some leaders in the Mennonite community fear that Mennonites' commitment to the church's peace theology is fading.

"I felt the Mennonite Brethren had given this little attention in recent times," longtime Mennonite Brethren leader Harold Jantz said at a recent peace consultation hosted by Mennonite Central Committee Canada. "I don't see a great deal of effort being made to giving a peace message in our congregations."

Other church representatives told similar stories. "I think we're not talking about it very often," said Henry Dueck, past executive secretary of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference. He said church members are often influenced by the larger Christian community which doesn't emphasize peace.

But Jack Suderman, who works with peace and justice issues for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, doesn't see peace theology being lost. "I don't think there ever was a golden era," he says.—*MCC Canada News Service*

'More-With-Less Cookbook' keeps cooking

SCOTTDALE, Pa.—People are still hungry for Doris Janzen Longacre's *More-With-Less Cookbook.* Last month, as the 46th printing of the landmark book was ordered, Herald Press, the cookbook's publisher, received the Gold Book Award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. The award is given for books that have sold more than 500,000 copies.

More-With-Less Cookbook sales stand at 688,000 copies, including 85,000 of a German edition, 63,500 of an out-of-print mass-market paperback and 54,000 of an out-of-print British edition. More than 7,500 copies of the cookbook were sold during the last fiscal year.

Book royalties, more than $500,000 so far, go to Mennonite Central Committee.

MBM awards grant for Calgary, Edmonton work

ELKHART, Ind.—Mennonite Board of Missions has given a $5,000 church-planting grant to support a pastor who is organizing two groups in the Northwest Conference.

The grant, given to the conference, will help provide a full-time salary for Carlos Vera, pastor of Love in Action Christian Centre in Calgary. The 4-year-old congregation of about 60 people is primarily made up of new Christians from low-income families. The grant will also help support Vera's work in developing a similar group in Edmonton.

Vera is now paid on a part-time basis from both Love in Action and conference funds. —*MBM News Service*

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Events

School for Leadership Training, Jan. 18-21, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. Theme: "Eat This Scroll: Owning the Scriptures in the Congregation." Contact: 540-432-4260 or kounss@emu.edu.

Pacific Southwest Conference midyear assembly, Jan. 29-30, Fresno, Calif.

Workers

Brunk, Truman Jr., was installed Sept. 20 as associate pastor at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Buck, Ron, has concluded a pastorate at First Mennonite Church, McMinnville, Ore.

Buckwalter, Millie, Lancaster, Pa., has been named prayer ministries coordinator for Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM).

Burrus, Rennie, has been named pastor of St. Johns Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio.

Driedger, June Mears, was ordained Nov. 8 as pastoral team member at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Epp, Rosie, has been named pastor at Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Flaten, Mark, has concluded a pastorate at Swiss Mennonite Church, Alsen, N.D.

Horst, Eric, has been named pastor at Boynton Mennonite Church, Hopedale, Ill.

Jessen, Steve, has concluded a pastorate at Ashland (Mont.) Christian Fellowship.

Keener, Willard and Barbara, Elizabethtown, Pa., are beginning three-year assignments with EMM in Tiranë, Albania.

Keller, Mark, was installed Sept. 20 as associate pastor at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Kennedy, Thomas, was licensed Sept. 27 as youth pastor at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Knowles, Michael, has been named pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Lind, Ralph, has concluded a pastorate at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, James M., Mount Joy, Pa., has been named Mennonite Mutual Aid fraternal adviser for southcentral Pennsylvania.

Minninger, Mary and Phil, have been named co-pastors at Paoli (Ind.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Penner, Bruno, has concluded a pastorate at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Newport, Wash.

Rupp, Bev Cook, has been named associate pastor at Prince of Peace Mennonite Church, Corvallis, Ore.

Schrag, LeVerle, has been named associate pastor at First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kan.

Weaver, Naomi, Ephrata, Pa., is beginning a two-year assignment with EMM in Vietnam.

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Births

Arn, Jonathan Allen, Nov. 8, to Nathan and Robin (Bystrom) Arn, Round Lake Park, Ill.

Baldauf, Sarah Qi, Aug. 23, 1997, received for adoption Oct. 15, 1998, by Janice (Martin) and Richard Baldauf, Gap, Pa.

Berkey, Drew Dennis, Oct. 30, to Stacy (Stringer) and Tracy Berkey, Hubbard, Ore.

Boettger, Bryson Lee, Nov. 4, to Brian and Yvonne (Kauffman) Boettger, Harrisonburg, Va.

Bosler, Hannah Maria Rosa, Oct. 9, to Chris and Marisa Bosler, Mohnton, Pa.

Cassel, Michaela Lauren, Nov. 12, to Laurie (Derstine) and Michael Cassel, Green Lane, Pa.

DeFehr, Alexander Aubrey, Oct. 9, to James DeFehr and Heidi Derstine, Cornelius, N.C.

Derstine, Megan Elizabeth, Nov. 10, to Karen (Halteman) and Kevin Derstine, Souderton, Pa.

Ernst, Samantha Lee, Oct. 20, to Lisa (Ebhart) and Shane Ernst, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Freed, Emily Grace, Nov. 12, to Brenda (Kolb) and Jason Freed, Virginia Beach, Va.

Frey, Alexis Paige, Oct. 2, to Sarah Frey, Barberton, Ohio.

Hamm, Logan Myles, Nov. 5, to Kevin and Renee (Schmidt) Hamm, Newton, Kan.

Herr, Bridget Mae, Nov. 4, to Becky and Robert Herr Jr., Marietta, Pa.

Horsley, Jacob Thomas, Nov. 14, to Sonya (Moser) and William Horsley III, Johnstown, Pa.

Kauffman, Satwashila Radhika, Feb. 18, 1992, received for adoption Sept. 18, 1998, by Galen and Betty Jean (Owen) Kauffman, Surrey, N.D.

Kennell, Thomas Allen, Nov. 7, to Rick and Vicki (Munro) Kennell, West Lafayette, Ind.

Layman, Whitney Anne, Oct. 22, to Lynn (Troyer) and Rodd Layman, Fairview, Mich.

Liechty, Martha Laura, Sept. 18, to Graig and Mary (Campbell) Liechty, Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

Mast, Sasha Marie, Nov. 16, to Alex and Chandra Page Mast, Ephrata, Pa.

Naisby, Jason Alan Edward, Oct. 25, to Brett and Joanne (Bean) Naisby, Plattsville, Ont.

Oswald, Allison Renae, Nov. 17, to Mystee (Berry) and Steve Oswald, Bloomington, Ill.

Overman, Isabel Annika, Oct. 30, to Julie (Harr) and Michael Overman, Evanston, Ill.

Rhoads, Shtefan George, Nov. 16, to Don and Gabriella (Damien) Rhoads, Manheim, Pa.

Rupp, Connor Everett, Nov. 8, to Lisa and Rick Rupp, Pettisville, Ohio.

Schumm, Emily Patricia, Oct. 26, to Darryl and Lisa Schumm, Stratford, Ont.

Swartley, Michelle Joy, Nov. 10, to Emily (Hertzler) and Kenton Swartley, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Sykes, Kay Lee Sierra, Oct. 18, to James and Lee Ann Sykes, Brampton, Ont.

Vandever, Andrea Dawn, Nov. 6, to Andreas and Rhonda (Toews) Vandever, Inman, Kan.

Weaver, Brooke Marie, Nov. 10, to Lisa (Nunemaker) and Lonnie Weaver, Elkhart, Ind.

Witman, Jonathan Andrew, Nov. 8, to Beth (Weber) and Curtis Witman, Denver, Pa.

Yoder, Troy Rydell, Nov. 4, to Megan (Coffey) and Todd Yoder, East Douglas, Mass.

Marriages

Baechler/Collier: Murray Baechler, Tavistock, Ont., and Lynn Collier, Tavistock, Nov. 6.

Dawson/Forney: Brandi Dawson, Flanagan, Ill., and Jon Forney, Flanagan, Sept. 5 at Christian Church, Flanagan.

Elizalde/Graybill: José Elizalde, Mexico City, and Deena Graybill, Freeport, Ill., Sept. 12 at East Chicago, Ind.

Epp/Franz: Cleola Pankratz Epp, Henderson, Neb., and George Franz, Henderson, Nov. 14 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Fry/Gochenaur: Doug Fry, Shipshewana, Ind., and Beth Gochenaur, LaGrange, Ind., Nov. 7.

Hawkins/Howell: Michael Hawkins, Reading, Pa., and Venita Howell, Gilbertsville, Pa., Sept. 26 at Zion Mennonite Church, Birdsboro, Pa.

Larson/Peters: Jana Larson, Prairie Village, Kan., and Chris Peters, Prairie Village, Oct. 31 at Kansas City, Mo.

Lahr/Yoder: Suzanne Lahr, Lakewood, Ohio, and Chad Yoder, Lakewood, Oct. 24 at Saint Clements Church, Navarre, Ohio.

Martin/Pate: Mary Beth Martin, Brewton, Ala., and Jeremy Pate, Brewton, Oct. 24 at Brewton.

Nickels/Tucker: Craig Nickels, Bradshaw, Neb., and Monica Tucker, Kingman, Ariz., Nov. 7 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Schlabach/Swartzentruber: Mark Schlabach, Millersburg, Ohio, and Lorie Swartzentruber, Millersburg, Nov. 7.

Tasker/Wilson: Maretta Tasker, Conn, Ont., and Stuart Wilson, Conn, Nov. 14.

Deaths

Albrecht, Susanna Mae, 66, Fairview, Mich., died Nov. 6 of a heart attack. Spouse: Erlis Albrecht. Parents: Seth and Edna Troyer (deceased). Other survivors: children Diane Rhoads, Kathy Neff, Steve, Dawn Shantz; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 9 at Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

Bontrager, Orval, 62, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 15. Spouse: Gladys Bauman Bontrager. Parents: Uriah and Esther Bender Bontrager (deceased). Other survivors: children Greg, Gary, Doug; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 19 at East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Buckwalter, Esther Shenk, 70, Newport News, Va., died Oct. 22 of cardiac arrhythmia. Spouse: Erlis Buckwalter. Parents: Henry and Frankie Showalter Shenk (deceased). Other survivors: children Ben, Edith Holsopple, Laine; three grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Warwick River Mennonite Church, Newport News.

Clark, Robert Jr., 46, Maple Shade, N.J., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Paula Clark. Parents: Robert (deceased), Murry (stepfather) and Lorraine Clark Cohen. Other survivor: brother Rickie Clark. Funeral: Nov. 2 at Thomas Mills, Pa.

Gerber, Willis, 88, Dalton, Ohio, died Oct. 30. Spouse: Selma Sommer Gerber. Parents: Jacob and Linda Sommer Gerber (deceased). Other survivors: children Harold, Don, Joanne, Robert; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 2 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Gingrich, Keith, 57, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 11 of cancer. Spouse: Elizabeth Baines Gingrich. Parents: Willard and Olive Graybill Gingrich. Other survivors: children Jennifer, Julia, Jonathan, Jeffrey. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Groff, Mary Reeser, 87, Lancaster, Pa., died Nov. 3. Spouse: Martin Groff. Parents: Martin and Rachel Reeser (deceased). Other survivors: children Kenneth, Gloria Crowley; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Old Road Mennonite Church, Gap, Pa.

Horsch, Edna Springer, 88, Hopedale, Ill., died Nov. 10. Spouse: Ervin Horsch (deceased). Parents: John and Anna Birkey Springer (deceased). Survivors: children Robert, Loretta Bohlen, Janice Litwiller; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Iutzi, Sidney, 78, Tavistock, Ont., died Oct. 31. Spouse: Viola Iutzi. Survivors: children Carolyn Ramseyer, Brian, Jim, Brenda Porter, Ross; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Cassel Mennonite Church, Tavistock.

Kanagy, Alvin, 71, Dayton, Va., died Nov. 6 of cancer. Spouse: Annie Yoder Kanagy. Parents: Jacob and Sallie Kanagy (deceased). Other survivors: children Julia Hales, Pauline Layman, Sharon Heatwole, Arlen, David, Jon, Paul, Phil; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Memorial service: Nov. 9 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Keim, Leanna Yoder, 62, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 19 of cancer. Spouse: Albert Keim. Parents: Melvin and Luella Yoder (deceased). Other survivors: daughter Melody Keim-Shenk; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Kulp, Mary Ellen, 91, Harleysville, Pa., died Nov. 19. Parents: Abram and Annie Halteman Kulp (deceased). Funeral: Nov. 22 at Peter Becker Community Chapel, Harleysville.

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Layman, Frances Swartz, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 6. Spouse: Earl Layman. Parents: Gabriel and Fannie Rhodes Swartz (deceased). Other survivors: son Neal; two grandchildren; two stepgrandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 8 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Lebron, Patricia Ann Dunkle, 54, Newport News, Va., died Sept. 26. Spouse: Ramon Lebron. Parents: Blaine (deceased) and Edna Mason Dunkle. Other survivors: children Richard, Rodney, Ryan. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Warwick River Mennonite Church, Newport News.

Martin, Abel, 74, New Holland, Pa., died Oct. 31. Spouses: Fay Frankhouser (deceased), Dorothy Weaver Martin. Parents: Jonas and Maria Martin (deceased). Survivors: children Janice Hurst, Karen Miller, Larry, Dennis; stepchildren Sharon Colon, Norma Musser, Iris Zeiset, Earla Nolt, James Zimmerman; 11 grandchildren; seven stepgrandchildren; three stepgreat-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 4 at New Holland (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Martin, Carl Phillip, 44, New Paris, Ind., died Oct. 12. Spouse: Charlotte Martin. Parents: Eli (deceased) and Dorothy Martin. Other survivors: children Ryan, Nathan, Katelyn, Cory. Funeral: Oct. 16 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind.

May, Goldie Dove, 85, Broadway, Va., died Oct. 24. Parents: Joseph and Zerna Dove Dove (deceased). Survivors: son Gerald; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Broadway.

Rupp, Carl Jr., 35, Landisville, Pa., died Nov. 10 from a brain tumor. Spouse: Patti Rupp. Parents: Mr. and Mrs. Carl Rupp. Other survivor: son Aaron. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Landisville (Pa.) Church of God.

Shank, Lauren, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 8. Spouse: Dorothy Smith Shank. Parents: David and Cora Metzler Shank (deceased). Other survivors: children Joan, Susan, Richard, James; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Slabach, Paul, 37, Lyndhurst, Va., died Oct. 27 in an automobile accident. Spouse: Regina Frey Slabach. Parents: Orpha Hilty (deceased) and Monroe Slabach. Other survivors: children Ryan, Kendal, Stephanie. Funeral: Oct. 31 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst.

Snyder, Beatrice Miller, 90, Baden, Ont., died Sept. 25. Spouse: Delton Snyder (deceased). Parents: David and Lydia Bast Miller (deceased). Other survivors: children Betty Yantzi, Myrtle; seven grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden.

Stone, James Edward, 71, Denver, died Nov. 4. Spouse: Virginia Stone. Parents: Frank and Edna Stone (deceased). Other survivors: children Kristine Fabrello, Charles; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo.

Swartzendruber, Sara Kay, 11, Lakewood, Colo., died Nov. 13 from head injuries in an automobile accident. Parents: David and Kay Swartzendruber. Other survivor: brother, Cody. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Green Mountain Presbyterian Church, Lakewood.

Unternahrer, Joseph, 88, Cairo, Neb., died Oct. 27 of heart failure. Spouse: Kathrine Gascho Unternahrer. Parents: Joseph and Magdelina Unternahrer (deceased). Funeral: Oct. 30 at Wood River (Neb.) Mennonite Church.

Weaver, Algie, 91, Windber, Pa., died Sept. 13. Parents: L.H. and Emma Weaver (deceased). Memorial service: Oct. 10 at Stahl Mennonite Church, Johnstown, Pa.

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Wyse, Lawrence, 75, Fairview, Mich., died Nov. 15 of cancer. Spouse: Mary Detweiler Wyse. Parents: Albert and Abbie Wyse (deceased). Other survivors: children Dwight, Louise Morrison, Pat Falk, Dexter, Dennis, Duane, Judy Kauffman, Donavon; 30 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

Yutzy, Emma Miller, 88, South Hutchinson, Kan., died Oct. 31 of cancer. Spouse: Edward Yutzy (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Susie Miller (deceased). Survivors: children Lloyd, Clayton, Gladys Meadows, Estella Headings, Wilma Leahy, Thelma Kauffman, Viola Unruh; 21 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Yoder (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

classifieds

Classified advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

- **Menno Haven Camp** and Retreat Center, located in central Illinois, seeks ***executive director***. Job description available upon request. Contact Doug Roth, 309-263-8933; or Wanda Bouwman, 630-427-1317.

- **The Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee** and Lehman's Hardware announce a full-time ***summer college intern*** position for 1999 in Wayne County, Ohio. Application deadline Jan. 29, 1999. Contact PJC at 330-683-6844 or email mcpjc@sssnet.com.

- **Kansas Rural Center:** Work with ***urban gardening, sustainable agriculture*** and communications as an intern in a dynamic organization. Contact Mennonite Voluntary Service (316-283-5100) about the Kansas Rural Center position.

- **12th Annual Weekend for Music & Worship Leaders: *The Imagination Aroused*** will be held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Jan. 8-10, 1999. Come to Laurelville to explore the imagination as applied to worship for the season of Pentecost. Leaders: Ken Nafziger, Marlene Kropf, Ted Schwartz and Lee Eschleman, Marilyn Houser Hamm, Tom Harder and Barbara Peterson. Call 800-839-1021 for registration information.

- **Masculinity With Integrity: *Spiritual Companionship for Male Leaders*** will be held Jan. 25-27, 1999, at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center; and Feb. 15-17, 1999 at Amigo Center. The event is primarily a spiritual retreat for men who carry leadership responsibilities in Anabaptist and Mennonite churches and church-related organizations. Leaders: Everett J. Thomas and J. Lorne Peachey. Call Laurelville (800-839-1021) or Amigo (616-651-2811) for registration information.

- **Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship**, Boise, Idaho, seeks a full-time ***pastor or pastoral team***. Interested people need to be energetic, open to incorporating the congregation's gifts in worship, people-oriented, committed to church growth and community outreach. Pastoral training and experience are required with skills in relationships with the youth, speaking and fellowship.

  For additional details or questions, contact Karen Nolt, search committee chair, 208-853-8725; email kjnolt@hotmail.com. Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship, 1520 N. 12th St., Boise, ID 83702.

- **Mennonite Central Committee** (MCC) is actively recruiting for the ***accounting manager*** position at Ten Thousand Villages, Akron, Pa. All applicants must exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree in accounting, CPA or equivalent preferred; five years experience including financial analysis experience preferred; Word Perfect and spreadsheet experience required; attention to detail and organization; experience working importing preferred. This is a full-time, two-year salaried position.

  For more information, or to receive a job description, please contact Prem Dick or Goldie Kuhns at 717-859-1151, MCC Human Resources, or email psd@mcc.org or gpk@mcc.org.

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- **Akron Mennonite Church** seeks a half-time ***children's education minister*** beginning after Feb. 1, 1999, to supervise and resource Christian education activities. Bachelor's degree in education required, theological training preferred.

  Contact Akron Mennonite Church, 1311 Diamond St., Akron, PA 17501, for a job description, or phone 717-859-1488.

- **Greencroft**, a not-for-profit retirement community located in Goshen, Ind., is seeking a ***health-care administrator***. The administrator will manage day-to-day operations and provide supervision to health-care department heads in the Gables Health Care. Qualified candidates will have, or be able to secure, a valid nursing home administrator license in Indiana, will be experienced in long-term care health care and subacute care administration, and will possess a baccalaureate or higher degree. In addition, qualified candidates will be committed to Christian ministry, able to identify with and support the mission, goals and values of Greencroft, and will possess a supportive and nurturing leadership style.

  Qualified candidates should send letter of interest, resume, salary history and requirements and list of references to Tim Croyle, SPHR, vice president of human resources, Greencroft, P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46527-0819; 219-537-4038; fax 219-537-4067. Greencroft is an equal opportunity employer and is sponsored by Mennonite Health Services.

- **Mennonite Central Committee** (MCC) is actively recruiting for the ***personnel development administrator*** position in the Human Resources Department in Akron, Pa. All applicants must exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree, master's degree (preferred); background in working with personnel development or related field; strong interpersonal and communication skills; commitment to work sensitively and deliberately with the concerns of all, particularly women, people of color and support staff; experience/skill in systems analysis as it relates to organization development and organization culture; MCC leadership experience preferred. This is a full-time, three-year salaried position.

  For more information, or to receive a job description, please contact Prem Dick or Goldie Kuhns at 717-859-1151, MCC Human Resources, or email psd@mcc.org or gpk@mcc.org. Applications due Dec. 16, 1998.

- **Bluffton College** seeks applicants for the following tenure-track faculty positions beginning fall semester 1999:

  Education—Director of graduate studies: Administer the Master of Arts in Education program; teach undergraduate and graduate courses in foundations, curriculum methods and classroom management; and place and supervise student teachers. Doctorate required. Certification in adolescent/young adult (secondary) education; areas of expertise to be considered include English, health/physical education and social sciences.

  Mathematics: Ph.D. in mathematics or mathematics education. Competency to teach most areas of mathematics and expertise in related disciplines will be viewed favorably. Proficiency in using graphics calculators and computer software is expected.

  Business: Ph.D. in business administration or DBA with interest in financial management. Join an interdisciplinary faculty team to develop and teach in a new Master of Organizational Management program. Additional teaching duties in the undergraduate business administration program and in the accelerated adult degree-completion program in organizational management.

  Sociology and criminal justice: Ph.D. in sociology preferred; ABD considered. Willingness to focus in the applied areas of sociology such as criminology, conflict resolution and mediation, community justice, sociology of law, race and ethnic relations. Commitment to social justice essential; employment or consulting experience in the justice system desirable. Ability to teach a variety of sociology and criminal justice courses and to coordinate and supervise off-campus internships.

  Volleyball coach/health, physical education, recreation: Master's degree required; Ph.D. preferred. Collegiate experience in coaching volleyball desirable. Physical education and recreation generalist who can teach in several areas of the field, including kinesiology, recreation leadership, team and individual sports, and exercise physiology. Coaching duties include responsibility for the organization and administration of all phases of a nationally competitive NCAA Division III women's volleyball program.

  Additional information is available at http://www.bluffton.edu. Review of applications for all positions will begin Jan. 1, 1999, and continue until appointments are made.

  Send letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three letters of references and official transcripts to Joetta H. Schlabach, special assistant to the dean of academic affairs, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. AA/EOE. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

by Rich Preheim

A woman's place

The priesthood might very well be a place for a woman. That's why several gatherings of European Catholic priests this fall called for renewed discussion on the role of women in the church and changes in criteria for admission to the priesthood.

In issuing their statement, the Council of European Conferences of Priests acknowledged the role women already play within the Catholic church, according to *National Catholic Reporter.*

"We welcome warmly the growing responsibility of lay women and men for our church," the council's statement says. "It is for this reason that we seek renewed discussion of such themes as the place of women in the church, changes in criteria for admission to the priesthood and the responsibility of the laity. For many, such issues are, fundamentally, questions of human dignity."

The statement also calls dialogue "the necessary and essential way forward."

The National Conference of Priests in England and Wales earlier this year issued a similar statement, lamenting "increasingly restrictive and sanction-based directives" from the Vatican.

Pope John Paul II in 1994 declared that "the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the church's faithful."

Blanketing them with love

Susan Lucky, a Methodist from Stillwater, Okla., wanted to do something in remembrance of those killed in the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. So she made 19 quilts, one for each child who died in the blast. The quilts have been on display in church offices and conferences.

It was at one of those conferences in 1996 that Lucky met a Methodist bishop from Argentina. "He told me the tragic story of two bombings in his own country," she recalls in *United Methodist Review.* "The Israeli embassy and the Jewish Community Center were both bombed, killing 12 members of the Jewish community there."

So Lucky made another quilt, which was recently delivered to Buenos Aires. The quilt has a hands-and-hearts motif.

"We love with our hearts and the response starts there, but it takes more than just caring thoughts," she says. "It is in the actions of our hands that our caring becomes concrete."

Don't rock the boat

More than 150 Salvation Army officers will remain in their sunken-ship tomb after the Quebec government thwarted attempts to retrieve valuables from the wreckage.

In a disaster of Titanic proportions, the liner Empress of Ireland went down in the St. Lawrence River off Quebec in 1914, 14 minutes after the ship collided with another vessel in dense fog. More than 1,000 people died in the wreck, including the Salvation Army officers. Six hundred bodies remain trapped in the ship.

To recover $1 million worth of nickel ingots, a salvager was planning to dynamite the Empress of Ireland, thereby scattering the remains of the dead, reports *Faith Today.* But Paul Murray, director of the Salvation Army Heritage Centre in Toronto, strongly objected, helping lead to the Quebec government's decision to declare the wreckage a heritage site, meaning nothing can be taken without government permission.

Putting faith to feet

And from that other great religion—sports—comes this report: A graduate assistant soccer coach at St. John's University, Jamaica, N.Y., quit earlier this year rather than wear the Nike swoosh as part of an endorsement deal between the nation's largest Catholic university and the giant maker of shoes and other athletic apparel.

"As Catholics, it's our duty to help the poor," James Keady tells the Associated Press. "But in this case, we're hurting the poor. It runs counter to everything we stand for as a school and as Catholics. And not only are we not speaking up against this injustice, we're benefiting from it."

Nike has come under harsh criticism for some of its production methods, such as hiring Asian workers to toil in hot, noisy factories for as little as 80 cents a day. Says Keady, "I don't want to be a billboard for a company that would do those things."

Maybe it's in the Apocrypha

The World Council of Churches was apparently gushing about its Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2000. According to a WCC news release, the week's theme will be "Blessed be God … who has blessed us in Christ"—from Effusions 1:3.

As a subsequent correction to the news release pointed out, the text is actually from Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Tidbits

- The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has approved a resolution calling for U.S. aid to Israel to be contingent on Israel's fulfillment of the Oslo peace accords. —*Sojourners*
- According to a survey of 15 East Coast Quaker schools, kindergarten through grade 12, 6.2 percent of enrollments were Quaker.—*Friends Journal*
- Since the Islamic regime seized power in Iran in 1979, more than 200 adherents to the Baha'i faith have been executed because of their religion. —*Dallas Morning News*
- Promise Keepers at the end of October cut its full-time staff 28 percent, from 250 to 180 employees.—*Christianity Today*

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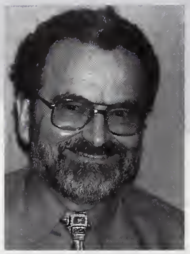

J. Lorne Peachey

'An in-turn take-out would have given us the hammer, but I couldn't get my second rock over the hog line'

Integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) will surely bring new experiences of church to many of us. But I never dreamed it would put me on ice with a broom uttering words like "skip," "peel" and "biter."

That happened at the conclusion of the fall meeting of the GC and MC general boards together with the host general board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC). After three long days of working on the details of integration (see stories on pages 13-15), board members went curling.

What an experience! Oh, it started out great for me as the "second" on our team; my very first "rock" got closest to the "button" in the "house" to score the first point for our team. After that it was a quick slide with most of my throws putting me face down on the ice, much to the amusement of my "friends" in the gallery. But then, looking around at our 12 teams of four, I found I had lots of company.

In a variety of ways, what happened at the Wildewood Club in Winnipeg on Saturday evening, Nov. 21, mirrored what took place during the three days of meetings on the campus of Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Members of the CMC-GC-MC general boards struggled to find their way through unfamiliar territory. After all, who has had experience integrating a church before?

> If we would follow the Spirit's leading into a new Mennonite Church, all of us—individuals, congregations, conferences—must put this consultation on our daily prayer lists.

Some of the "rocks" of the joint agenda scored an almost perfect hit. One was the plan to organize the new denomination along country lines—with a Mennonite Church Canada and a Mennonite Church U.S. Having decided at their spring meeting to consider this direction, at Winnipeg the boards divided into country caucuses without a dissenting murmur.

One rock some thought would score but didn't was visual identity for the new Mennonite Church. Not enough board members liked the dove-and-olive-branch logo being proposed and called for another throw before St. Louis 99.

But the rock that brought the most discussion had to do with who can be members of the new denomination. The Membership Committee had tried a throw—proposing that any congregation now GC, MC or CMC automatically belongs to the new church. But at least five area conferences have said that, if this proposal stands, they may need to reconsider remaining part of the integration game.

What slows down this rock is, of course, homosexuality. Several MC area conferences have dismissed congregations, all dually affiliated, that accept noncelibate homosexuals as members. These congregations still retain their GC membership. As David Schroeder of the Membership Committee put it, the issue now becomes how to honor the decision of one area conference without dishonoring that of another when the two disagree.

Board members decided to call still another "end" or round on this one—a sort of Jerusalem Conference of North American Mennonites at the end of the 20th century, if you will. In March 1999, leaders from across Canada and the United States will gather to try to come to some understanding about church membership, discipline and homosexuality.

This is a tough rock, one some feel could call off the whole game. For that reason the general boards' action also calls for the church to begin to pray—*now*—for the planning and implementation of this consultation.

It's a call we do well to heed. If we want to follow the Spirit's leading into a new Mennonite Church, all of us—individuals, congregations and conferences—should put this issue and this consultation on our daily prayer lists.

Who knows what could result? When the organizers of the first-century church went into concentrated prayer, they found themselves speaking strange new words that were not part of their vocabulary before (see Acts 1 and 2). The Holy Spirit could take us too beyond the language of winning or losing, of law or grace, of being "in" or "out" to something completely new for a new church. It's a play worth our best shot.—*jlp*

the Mennonite

December 15, 1998

look
for the one who is coming

4 Singing round the Christmas yucca tree

8 Disciplinary action and warm relations

9 Yoders thrust into Indonesian schism

16 Why bother with Mennonite?

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

The primacy of relationships

The words "God calls us first to relationships" from the Nov. 17 editorial ("You Can Go Home Again") took on special meaning after attending the Mennonite Board of Missions reunion in Indiana Nov. 13-14. We were at MBM in voluntary service from 1954 to 1956. As newlyweds, we came with no expertise, only an eagerness to serve. We left with a wealth of new relationships and inspiration for our life's work. The reunion rekindled the harmonious and nonhierarchical relations reminiscent of VS days. We experienced a caring and personal touch among the staff which was not lost in the midst of executing Christ's command to world evangelism.

We, too, believe that "God calls us first to relationships," for they are the foundation of our salvation, the enrichment of our fellowship and the impetus for our outreach.—*Norman and Phyllis Lyndaker, Lowville, N.Y.*

Thanks for the very powerful editorial "You Can Go Home Again." The words on relationships were just right; not only did the thoughts on going home resonate with me, but the words on uncertainty and change in the context of relationships were very meaningful to me. I always want to have it all together and see everything in place before I feel I'm ready to act or move forward. You say beliefs and arguments and structures don't necessarily have to be resolved or stabilized: Life can go on—and it will go on more easily—when we cultivate relationships with God and with each other. Amen.—*Hardy Schroeder, Kitchener, Ont.*

The Nov. 17 editorial caught the essence of what we believe Christianity to be: relationships. Jesus related to all manner of people, teaching that by our fruits we would be known. He also said we would be judged by how we related to others ("I was hungry and you gave," etc.) "Love your neighbor as yourself" as the fulfillment of the law has profound implications for relationships, since love cannot exist in isolation. We need to learn to look for what we have in common so we are able to relate. —*Marian and James Payne, Heathsville, Pa.*

Neglecting the calendar, abandoning connections

Re the Nov. 24 editorial ("Happy New Year"): When I was a child in the Mennonite Brethren church, we didn't observe Advent or Lent, but the other important events in the life of Jesus received much attention. Christmas was observed with services on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Dec. 26. The new year was ushered in by a watch night service on New Year's Eve, followed by a service on New Year's Day as well. Epiphany was recognized as the Feast of the Three Kings. Holy Week began with Palm Sunday, Communion on Maundy Thursday, a solemn service on Good Friday, an ecumenical sunrise service at the cemetery and church services on Easter Sunday morning and evening. Ascension Day was observed with a morning church service, followed by a recognition of Pentecost Sunday 10 days later.

Compared to today's practices, this may seem to be excessive churchgoing. Mother's Day, high school and college graduations, Father's Day and Super Bowl Sunday receive more attention in our church year than do the holy days of significance to all Christians from ages past and around the world. After talking with my Lutheran and Roman Catholic friends, I am embarrassed because their churches are much more attuned to the Christian year than is mine.

In our neglect of the Christian calendar and wide acceptance of purely secular events in our church life, we have profaned the sacred and made sacred the profane. We may pay dearly for our gradual abandonment of those elements in our worship life which keep us connected to Christ and to the worldwide body of believers from ages past to the present.—*Verna Zook, Iowa City, Iowa*

A shot in the foot

The articles on advertising (Mediaculture, Nov. 10) caused me to examine the ad messages in *The Mennonite.* I'd suggest the people who wrote the articles take a closer look at *The Mennonite.* They may not like what they see.

Consider four ads in the Nov. 10 issue: The largest ad (full page) focused on money. A second also focused on money. A third begged me to take a trip to France. (The articles' writers state that I should shy away from ads that insist my life is not good enough. I wish I had the money to tour France, but I don't.) A fourth ad offered a Christmas gift suggestion (with October just off the calendar!).

Taking shots at subjects such as advertising is easy. In the future, I hope your writers tackle something with substance. For starters, write something to help me in my daily life. Skip the moral sermons, especially when when you shoot yourself in the foot.—*Fred Steiner, Bluffton, Ohio*

theMennonite

Vol. 1, No. 40, December 15, 1998

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We never know the rays on which our actions are carried to others

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The mind that comes to rest is tended in ways it cannot intend

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Jesus welcomed Mary as a disciple despite the traditions of his day

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Why bother with Mennonite?

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The Mennonite seeks to serve the U.S. context of the integrating General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church by helping readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world. *The Mennonite* (ISSN 0017-2340) is published weekly on Tuesdays—except for March 31, June 30, Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 in 1998—by the GC-MC Interim Periodical Board. Periodical postage paid at Scottdale, PA 15683-1999. Canada Post international publications mail sales agreement no. 128562, GST no. R122192453. Subscription rates: $34.95 (U.S.) per year. Group rates available. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the Interim Periodical Board, the General Conference Mennonite Church or the Mennonite Church.

Postmaster: Send form 3579 to 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683-1999.

readers say

Bad taste

The focus on Mountain View Mennonite Church's unsuccessful attempt to have a long-term pastor ("Accident Claims New Pastor's Life," Nov. 24) instead of focusing on the tragic death of Paul B. Slabach was in bad taste. It displayed a surprising lack of compassion and minimized the suffering of his bereaved family and friends by portraying a congregation as being more grieved by the loss of a functionary instead of a person whom they loved and treasured. *The Mennonite* is usually much more sensitive. —*Timothy Bentch, Szeged, Hungary*

Tampering with the basics

I want to express deep appreciation for Shirley Showalter's statement regarding the position of Goshen (Ind.) College on homosexuality (Readers Say, Nov 17). Our denomination and conferences have good statements on the issue, and it is most encouraging to note that finally articles are appearing in scholarly journals which support the 2,000-year teachings of the church.

Charles W. Socarides, clinical professor of psychiatry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Monteflore Medical Center in New York and president of the National Association of Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, writes of psychiatry faltering and America sleeping when homosexuality was removed from the category of aberrancy by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973. He writes: "In essence, this movement has accomplished what every other society, with rare exceptions, would have trembled to tamper with: a revision of the basic code and concept of life and biology. … Homosexuality cannot create a society or keep one going for very long."—*John M. Drescher, Quakertown, Pa.*

Cover photo
by Marilyn Nolt

Advent reflections

We never know the rays on which our actions are carried to touch others.

Singing round the Christmas yucca tree

by Fremont Regier

Last December we cut the top off a dead yucca plant to make a Zimbabwean Christmas tree. Each dried-up blossom clump made a nice nest for a small yellow candle. On each clump we also hung a cluster of bright scarlet coral tree beans. We set our "Christmas tree" out on our veranda because our living room is too small for all the people coming and going and activities that were to happen around the tree.

Lots of Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite mission workers and others visited us during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Some nights the veranda served as a spillover bedroom when all the other rooms filled with beds and mats on the floors. More importantly, the veranda is where we had our meals and where everyone gathered in the evenings for games, visiting and singing Christmas carols.

One day, after the holiday dust had settled and our house again became quiet, Marlene, our Zimbabwean neighbor, told us she had listened to the Christmas carols coming from our house at night. Marlene said she had been tempted to join us because of her love of Christmas music and the nostalgic memories our singing had produced in her spirit. We assured her that it would have been a delight.

Namu, our neighbor's gardener and a friend of ours, saw us putting up our "Christmas tree." We invited him to come over some evening when it was dark so we could light the candles for him.

After the holidays, I reminded Namu that he had never come over. He told us he and his wife had stood in the dark at our gate, enjoying the beauty of the candle-lit tree and listening to us singing Christmas songs. Namu said they had wanted so much to come and sing with us but lacked the boldness to crash our party.

We tried to convince Namu and his wife that we'd love to have them sing with us and that next time they should come join us.

We never know the rays on which our actions are carried to touch others.

Fremont Regier is from North Newton, Kan., and is a member of Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

Come and join us: Women in Zimbabwe cook outdoors.
MCC photo by Kevin King

Paul M Schrock

Learning to wait

by Liz McGeachy

The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.—Isaiah 14:7

I have been thinking a lot about waiting. This is due in part to my 5-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter, who have a hard time with the concept of waiting. Special occasions, such as birthdays and holidays, seem like a million years away to them. Even the idea of waiting three minutes for me to finish a task and focus on them can cause an uproar. It's hard to wait. I am constantly wondering how to teach them that waiting can bring good things.

Children are not alone in finding waiting difficult. The tables often turn when I have to wait for my son painstakingly to write his name or for my daughter to make it all the way from the front door to the car for the ride to school. I can easily lose patience in these situations, just like they do.

I also feel frustration about waiting in my community development work in eastern Kentucky. This area so rich with natural beauty and incredible people faces devastating problems—extreme poverty, environmental degradation, lack of basic resources—that in some ways have improved little since the War on Poverty 35 years ago.

A recent visitor to this area learned that people were advised to avoid touching the water in local rivers and streams, in large part to raw sewage. She was aghast. "How can people stand for that?" she asked. What she didn't know was that this is a complicated problem related to poverty, coal-company housing and lack of space for septic systems and that people have been working to correct it for years. But her question was valid. How long do people have to wait to see a difference?

Advent is a time set aside just for waiting—a time to prepare for the coming of Christ. But it's hard. I, like many people, don't deal with this waiting too well. It's easier to fill up the time with tasks and appointments than to quietly focus on making room in my heart for the Messiah. When I do allow myself that quiet space, I can begin to see a glimpse of God's presence in my life and in the world around me.

When I let myself be quiet, anticipating, I can see God in the pure joy my child has at learning to write his name all by himself, in the touch of a friend's hand during a time of sadness, in the removal of one straight pipe of sewage into the Kentucky River. God is here, with us. I can see that when I take the difficult step of remembering that God is in control, not me.

Kentucky writer Wendell Berry reminds us of this in one of his Sabbath poems:

"The mind that comes to rest is tended
In ways that it cannot intend:
Is borne, preserved, and comprehended
By what it cannot comprehend.
Your Sabbath, Lord, thus keeps us by
Your will, not ours. ..."
—*from "A Timbered Choir"*

Liz McGeachy works with Mennonite Central Committee in Whitesburg, Ky. She serves as a community development worker with the Letcher County Action Team.

When I let myself be quiet, anticipating, I can see God in the pure joy my child has at learning to write his name all by himself, in the touch of a friend's hand during a time of sadness, in the removal of one straight pipe of sewage into the Kentucky River.

transformations
a tM series

Jesus welcomed Mary as a disciple at his feet despite the prevailing religious and social traditions of his day.

Created in Christ

by Philip K. Clemens

Did you ever have a moment when a light suddenly came on in your mind? I did this past summer. I was reviewing Ephesians 2, one of my favorite Bible passages, and the words of verse 10 jumped out at me: "For we are what [God] has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."

The words were familiar. I had said them many times, having put the chapter to memory. But suddenly, on that summer morning, the Spirit directed my attention to the words "created in Christ Jesus," and a tingle went up and down my spine.

It was like a scene coming into sharp focus through binoculars, like a drawstring pulling everything together. I thought of Genesis 1:27: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." And Jesus was there in the beginning with God, says John 1:1-3, and all things came into being through him.

To the Corinthians the Apostle Paul writes of a creation in Christ that surpasses even the wonder of the physical and human world: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:16-17). In Christ, Paul says, we become part of a new creation.

In addition, Paul, arguing with the Galatians for freedom of the Spirit as against religious systems, bases his argument on new creation in Christ: "May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!" (Galatians 6:14-15).

"Christ in the House of Mary and Martha" by Jan Vermeer van Delft, © National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

Seeing Christ's creation in this way, I wonder why the church tends to use Genesis 3 as the model for Christian community. In that story, human beings are being punished for sin. Why should new creation in Christ imitate that fallen condition? The curse of sin is precisely why Christ died—to reconcile us to God by wiping out that enormous chasm of separation. When we accept God's reconciliation, God creates us in Christ Jesus, not in sin. Creation in Christ bridges that great abyss and returns us to the creation recounted in Genesis 1:27.

The image of God is our model, and community is the image of God—"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). Here there is harmony and peace, and God certifies it as "very good." No wonder Paul can't keep quiet about divisions among us. In Ephesians 2:15 he declares that Jesus came to make peace between factions of humanity, so he "abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace."

In Ephesians 2, Gentiles and Jews are Paul's example. In Galatians 3:28 Paul adds more categories: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Paul draws upon the Genesis image of harmonious community to describe the new humanity created in Christ.

The magnitude of Ephesians 2:10 leaves its mark on me: "For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." And the monumental verses that follow this gospel proclamation deepen my understanding of the peace and harmony and good works created in Christ.

First, verses 11-22 make it clear that it is not just a civil rights issue when we discriminate by ethnic heritage—it is a gospel issue. When we are created in Christ, there is a new creation that transforms both individual and community, a creation that God declares to be "very good." How can we be so slow in accepting the good news that we are all one in Christ Jesus? I applaud the impressive work of the Damascus Road project that is helping identify and break down our personal and institutional racism.

Second, it is not just a feminist issue when we discriminate between male and female leadership in the church—it is a gospel issue. Being created in Christ means we are community, "male and female," created together in the image of God. Unfortunately we disregard the many biblical references that support and encourage women in leadership, and we find ways to interpret selected New Testament verses to explain and excuse our prejudice for men over women. As a result we overlook the breadth and depth of the gospel message that Jesus proclaimed.

For example, Jesus welcomed Mary as a disciple at his feet despite the prevailing religious and social traditions of his day (Luke 10:38-42). Jesus himself commissioned Mary Magdalene as the first apostle of the risen Lord (John 20:17-18). The Apostle Paul proclaimed the same message in his support for Phoebe as a church leader (Romans 16:1-2) and preached oneness in Christ Jesus for Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. Who are we to ignore and alter this biblical authority?

Paul draws upon the Genesis image of harmonious community to describe the new humanity created in Christ.

Third, the advertising slogan "Our family can be your family" has raised questions for me. In developing this evangelism ad, we have provided helpful information about new life in Christ and about Mennonites and the church in general. And it is important for people to find a community that embodies such a life. But "our" family suggests arrogance on our part. Ervin R. Stutzman suggests a helpful direction with the title of his book *Being God's People* (Faith & Life Press, Herald Press, revised 1998). In Ephesians 2:11-22, Gentiles do not become Jews, nor do Jews become Gentiles. But because Christ has created in himself one new humanity in place of the two, he makes peace by reconciling "both groups to God in one body through the cross." Both groups leave their old positions and come together as God's people. Could our church's slogan reflect that truth?

Ephesians 2:10 woke me up. Over the years I have experienced, supported and enjoyed the gifts of God's Spirit as expressed by people of various ethnic groups and by women. But today I feel an urgency to publicly proclaim their acceptance as God's people, not only as regular, functioning members of the church but as leaders and teachers and pastors as well. By God's grace we are all created in Christ Jesus.

O God, may your good works be our way of life. Amen.

We've asked various people throughout the Mennonite world, What changes have you made in your life in the last two years because of your involvement with God's Word? Their replies will appear approximately every other week in *The Mennonite* for several months in this series called Transformations.—*Editors*

Philip K. Clemens pastors Beaverdam Mennonite Church, Corry, Pa.

Southeast Conference disciplinary action maintains warm relations with congregation

> On the surface of it, Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship is no longer a member of Southeast Conference. But the way it was done makes all the difference.
>
> —*Jim Rugh*

BROOKSVILLE, Fla.—Another congregation has lost its conference membership over the issue of homosexuality but in a mediated measure that was well received by all sides and devoid of the acrimony, bitterness and anger of some previous disciplinary actions.

Under an agreement approved by Southeast Conference delegates on Dec. 5, Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, which accepts noncelibate homosexuals as members, has "voluntarily agree[d] to pull back from regular membership" to nonmember participant status. AMF is no longer a Southeast member but remains "in fellowship with other conference members, though on an informal basis."

The agreement, developed by both AMF and Southeast, also calls on the conference to examine issues of polity, identity and relationships. Meanwhile, the congregation is to revisit its position on homosexuality and church membership, working with conference leaders. The conference's and congregation's work will be reviewed after three years, and a recommendation on AMF's continuing relationship with Southeast will be brought to the delegates.

Love and respect: Jim Rugh, an AMF representative at the special meeting, says congregation members are sad and concerned about their future ties with the church, particularly in light of integration, but that they have been met with love and respect by people who have disagreed with them.

"On the surface of it, AMF is no longer a member of Southeast Conference" Rugh says. "But the way it was done makes all the difference."

AMF's Southeast membership was suspended in May 1997 while the congregation and conference worked at the issue. Mennonite Conciliation Services was called in August to facilitate the process. It is the first time MCS has been involved in a Mennonite conference-congregation dispute over homosexuality and church membership, and it may be the first time any mediator has been used in any such dispute.

The delegate session, called solely to deal with AMF, featured intentional times of face-to-face dialogue. "That was a wonderful opportunity for people to express themselves … rather than people just standing and throwing stones across the aisle," Rugh says.

MCS facilitator Carolyn Schrock-Shenk says, "I think people listened to each other for the most part in respectful kinds of ways."

Four options: The proposed disciplinary action outlined four options for AMF's relationship with Southeast: (1) "special membership" as a congregation for "marginalized persons" but without full conference membership; (2) associate membership; (3) nonmember participant status; and (4) other. In a run-off vote, delegates favored nonmember status over special membership 41-12. Delegates then approved nonmember status 49-4. The decision required a two-thirds vote.

"We came away from that meeting being able to embrace each other and say we love each other even though we disagree greatly," says Southeast moderator Rocky Miller.

He says the issue has been divisive in the conference, with some members urging that it be dealt with swiftly. By agreeing to a proposal to withdraw from full conference membership, Miller says, "AMF gave us a gift of grace. … I really hope the conference congregations and conference members understand that."

Meeting participants credited MCS facilitators Schrock-Shenk and David Brubaker for their roles in the process. "Those on all sides of this issue were just awed by the way Carolyn and David handled all this," Rugh says.

An amputation: While the disciplinary process went well, conference council member Jonathan Larson laments the "ancient impulse to part ways when we disagree."

"Where faith is lived out, … we have an impoverished view of the wholeness of Christ," says Larson, pastor of AMF's sister congregation in Atlanta, Berea Mennonite Church.

"The position of the conference [on homosexuality] is clear, … and I'm not departing from that," he says. But he referrs to disciplinary actions against AMF and other congregations as amputations, "a shock to any physical body, and it should be a shock to any spiritual body."

AMF also holds membership in the General Conference Mennonite Church. Three other congregations in other Mennonite Church conferences have had memberships terminated over the issue of homosexuality.—*Rich Preheim*

Return for reconciliation

Virginia couple thrust into Indonesian church schism

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Lawrence and Shirlee K. Yoder returned to Indonesia for two months this summer with a sense of exhilaration, going back to a land where they had spent nearly 10 years and where their three children were born. But their anticipation was mingled with sadness because the Javanese Mennonite Church (GITJ), the oldest and largest of the three Indonesian Mennonite conferences, had split in two.

Although the Yoders didn't envision it, they found themselves working to foster reconciliation between the two groups—a process that still continues.

The Yoders, now living in Harrisonburg, served in Indonesia with Mennonite Central Committee from 1970 to 1979. Lawrence is a missiology professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, and Shirlee teaches at EMS and Eastern Mennonite High School, and is on the pastoral staff at Park View Mennonite Church. They were invited to the Indonesian island of Java by MCC country representatives Faye and Clair Brenneman. The Yoders expected to spend their time circulating among the churches, preaching, doing extension education work and strengthening relationships with people.

The call is made: But as soon as the Yoders settled in, former student of theirs visited and impressed on them the need to reconcile the rival sets of church leaders.

While the schism occurred in 1996, it had been brewing for some time, Lawrence says. The issues relate to the administration of the church and its institutions, including schools and a hospital. There has been litigation, fights for control of the hospital and suspicions about finances in the disposal of church property.

The last straw, Lawrence says, was a failure on the part of GITJ's top leaders to convene a regularly scheduled general assembly as dictated by their constitution. Younger leaders grew impatient and finally called their own assembly, which attracted representatives from two-thirds of the conference congregations. GITJ leaders quickly scheduled the original assembly meeting, but only one quarter of the congregations were represented. The two competing delegate assemblies have developed their own body of executive officials, each claiming to be the rightful GITJ leaders.

The Yoders met with representatives of both factions and developed the idea of a leadership conference. It was attended by 143 of 150 pastors and council chairs. Shirlee gave a meditation on Jesus' spirituality, and Lawrence led two sessions on healthy congregational and conference relations.

Courtesy photo

Lawrence and Shirlee Yoder (center) pose with members of both sides of a Javanese Mennonite Church split during a July retreat where the Yoders helped facilitate reconciliation efforts.

After the conference, a plan was formed to invite the nine executive committee members from the two leadership groups to a meeting to discuss how their conflicts might be resolved.

"I admit to some doubt that anyone would be willing to come," Lawrence says. "And, what would they think of an outsider convening this gathering?"

Almost everyone showed up, and amid tense moments, three agreements were made: to reunite, to work at resolving the conflicts and to appoint a team from both sides to work at the issues and to hold a delegate assembly as quickly as possible.

God at work: "After everyone left, Shirlee and I hugged each other and wept," Lawrence says. "It was a remarkable demonstration of God at work. What no one thought was possible and many had tried to accomplish had actually happened."

Since then, however, the reconciliation has not been easy. Five congregations have refused to back the process, and control of the hospital is still in dispute. Lawrence plans to return to Indonesia next month to help keep the reconciliation moving ahead.

"Much more work, difficult and challenging work, needs to be done. Keep praying," Lawrence says. "We still feel overwhelmed with gratitude for the work of the Holy Spirit among our brothers and sisters in Java … and humble that we were agents in that work."
—Jim Bishop

Indonesia: a first

Indonesia in 1851 became the first Mennonite overseas mission field when Dutch Mennonites sent Pieter Jansz to the island of Java. Work there led to the 1940 birth of the first Indonesian Mennonite conference, today known as the GITJ. The conference has 73 congregations with 46,000 members.

Indonesia is home to two other Mennonite conferences, made up primarily of people of Chinese, rather than Javanese, descent. The GKMI has 34 congregations and 13,000 members, and the JKI has 52 congregations and 3,500 members.

GCs, MCs to share in Christmas project

Funds to benefit St. Louis congregations, witness

ELKHART, Ind.—For the first time in the 25-year history of the Mennonite Church's annual Christmas Sharing Fund, General Conference Mennonite Church as well as MC congregations will be asked to support several projects.

Sharing Fund contributions will assist the development of an African-American Mennonite congregation in north St. Louis and a spin-off of St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship. Funds will also help the St. Louis fellowship and another local congregation, Bethesda Mennonite Church, continue a local peace center. St. Louis-area congregations are also supporting a media witness to coincide with St. Louis 99, the joint convention of the Mennonite Church, the General Conference and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada to be held July 23-27, 1999.

MC congregations will also be asked to support Hurricane Georges relief efforts in Puerto Rico. The Sept. 21 storm destroyed much of Academia Menonita Betania, a Mennonite school in Aibonito; a Mennonite church in Bauta; and the homes of many Mennonite families. A long-term Mennonite Disaster Service response on the island is under way.

Congregations relate to the Christmas Sharing Fund in different ways, says coordinator Ron Byler, MC General Board associate general secretary. Some congregations invite their members to give individually, while others encourage small groups and Sunday school classes to support the fund. Still others ask members to give through congregational offerings or make contributions from funds raised for congregational budgets.

The 1997 fund raised more than $50,000 for Christian Peacemaker Teams, congregational peace grants and a Mennonite Central Committee-related peace center in Bosnia.—*GCMC and MC General Board news services*

MBM starts centennial

ELKHART, Ind.—A century after a dramatic prayer meeting propelled a group of North American Mennonites into overseas missions, hundreds of people began a yearlong celebration of a worldwide web of Mennonites with a 24-hour prayer vigil and service.

Nearly 250 people gathered at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, on Nov. 15 to commemorate the commissioning of the Mennonite Church's first missionaries in the same church 100 years before. On Nov. 4, 1898, following an evangelistic service and all-night prayer meeting, Jacob Ressler and William B. and Alice Thut Page were commissioned to go to India, giving rise to Mennonite Board of Missions.

MBM in 1998 has nearly 1,000 missionaries and other volunteers in 27 countries.

"The model for action in 1898 was giving and sending," said keynote speaker John A. Lapp, former executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee and author of a book on the Mennonite church in India. But today, he suggested, missions' focus should be "working side by side."

In the 24 hours leading up to the Nov. 15 celebration, 35 people gathered to pray around the clock for MBM.—*Minda Kauffman of MBM News Service*

MBM photo by Tom Price

The adult choir from College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., performs during a Nov. 15 celebration of Mennonite Board of Missions commissioning its first overseas workers 100 years ago.

VORP pioneer takes message to Russia, Ukraine

MOSCOW—Howard Zehr, pioneer of the victim-offender reconcilation program (VORP) and advocate for restorative justice, spent 10 days this fall presenting seminars and meetings in Russia and Ukraine, joining with two local agencies to focus attention on a different approach to justice.

Interest in restorative justice has recently emerged in the former Soviet Union, and work has begun to create a pilot program in victim-offender mediation in Moscow.

"The primary function of the [justice] system has been to punish," Zehr told an audience at the Institute for Problems of Strengthening Law and Order in Moscow. "But there is almost no attempt to make wrongdoers take responsibility for their actions and also do something to begin restoring what they have damaged."

Zehr's visit coincided with the release of the Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored Russian translation of his 1990 book *Changing Lenses.* "The book is very helpful, both artistic and professional at the same time," says Evgeny Kretov, assistant director of Moscow's Tagansky Regional Committee for Juvenile Crime.—*Don Loewen for MCC News Service*

Bluffton helps students discover the church

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton College hosted “Discovering the Mennonite Church,” a Nov. 11 worship service and forum to familiarize students with the broader body of believers. Religion professor J. Denny Weaver gave an overview of Anabaptist history and the church’s relation to the social order; Mennonite Church General Board member Lavon Welty spoke on current issues facing the church, including the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada; and religion professor Loren Johns offered a litany prayer for the Mennonite churches.

New member baptized, then deported

TORONTO—Mennonite New Life Church usually conducts baptisms in the fall. But an exception was made for José Henriquez.

Henriquez, who had been attending the Hispanic congregation in Toronto for 14 months, was baptized Aug. 30, just days before the Salvadoran native was deported. At the U.S. border he was transported to a detention center in New Jersey, where he presumably remains. His family has not heard from him since his detention.

Mennonite New Life pastor Adolfo Puricelli says Henriquez was involved in movements for change in El Salvador.—*Canadian Mennonite*

EMM photo by Cheryl Hollinger

Wales of a harvest

Brandishing apples, bananas and oranges, the nursery class at Coedpenmaen Primary School in Pontypridd, Wales, prepare to recite a poem about fruit at the school’s recent harvest service, which is a Welsh tradition emphasizing giving out of a thankful heart. Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Cheryl and Joe Hollinger talked with the children about Cain and Abel, brothers who brought harvest gifts to God. “We reminded them that if God gave his best to us, we must also give our best to him in everything we do,” says Cheryl Hollinger.

Cancer claims counselor at age 62

SELLERSVILLE, Pa.—Nancy S. Lapp, a counselor and pastor for nearly two decades, died Dec. 6 after a two-year struggle with bone cancer. She was 62.

Lapp, trained in counseling and music therapy, served as Goshen (Ind.) College campus minister from 1981 to 1988, after which she was a counseling elder for five years at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen. Lapp was pastoral counselor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., from 1993 to 1995. She had been director of pastoral services at Penn Foundation since 1996.

Lapp was the wife of James Lapp, former Mennonite Church moderator and general secretary and current conference minister for Franconia Conference.

MCC Manitoba joins call for debt cancellation

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba has joined religious organizations around the world in the Jubilee 2000 campaign, calling for the cancellation of debt owed by the world’s poorest countries. Organizers are circulating petitions to be presented to a 1999 summit of the G-8 industrialized nations.
—*MCC Canada News Service*

by the way …

Between 1990 and 1995, Conservative Mennonite Conference congregations without Mennonite in their name had an average membership growth of 33 percent. Congregations with Mennonite in their name saw membership drop 9 percent.—*Brotherhood Beacon*

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Births

Berkey, Nathan Eugene, Nov. 18, to Gary and Veronica (Weirich) Berkey, Goshen, Ind.

Birky, Hugh Martin, Nov. 10, to Beth (Martin) and David Birky, Goshen, Ind.

Bontrager, Gretchen Ramer, Oct. 24, to Evan and Tonya (Ramer) Bontrager, Monee, Ill.

Burdette, Clara Mae, Oct. 22, to Jim and Ulonda (Miller) Burdette, Great Falls, Mont.

Dane, Molly Kate, Nov. 12, to Chad and Keri (Friesen) Dane, Clay Center, Neb.

Duckworth, Megan Lyn, Nov. 20, to Gwendolyn (Miller) and Patrick Duckworth, Goshen, Ind.

Freed, Jared Christopher, Nov. 16, to Cheryl (Clemmer) and Dave Freed, Schwenksville, Pa.

Higgins, Jason, Oct. 25, to Brett and Joanne (Bean) Higgins, Plattsville, Ont.

Kraybill, Erin Marie, Nov. 23, to Dawn (Klesner) and Tim Kraybill, Iowa City, Iowa.

Landis, Emily Marie, Nov. 9, to John and Lori (Dombach) Landis, Lancaster, Pa.

Lindsey, Kyle Sithol, March 30, 1998, received for adoption Nov. 13, by Dan and Ellen (Oerter) Lindsey, Chicago.

Preheim, Caroline Elizabeth, Oct. 15, to Brian and Cindy (Voran) Preheim, Prairie Village, Kan.

Schroeder, Justen Dean, Nov. 19, to Joel and Kay (Goertzen) Schroeder, Henderson, Neb.

Shenk, Garrett Michael, Nov. 22, to Jeromy and Katrina (Good) Shenk, Manheim, Pa.

Shenk, Philip Henry, Nov. 26, to Angela (Belzer) and Mervin Shenk, Manheim, Pa.

Snyder, Matthew David, Nov. 19, to Darryl and Missy (Trost) Snyder, Plain City, Ohio.

Stauffer, McKenna Rae, Nov. 11, to Dena (Yoder) and Kurt Stauffer, Belleville, Pa.

Thomas, Lily Louise, Oct. 29, to Carol (Slabach) and Eldon Thomas, Middlebury, Ind.

Yoder, Kate Marie, Oct. 26, to Dean and Julie (Gehman) Yoder, Morwood, Pa.

Marriages

Driedger/Johnstone: Susan Driedger, Gowanstown, Ont., and Doug Johnstone, Milverton, Ont., Sept. 27 at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Listowel, Ont.

Gallian/Kitchen: Sonia Gallian, Atwood, Ont., and Steve Kitchen, Cambridge, Ont., Oct. 3 at Listowel (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Higgins/Wagler: Rick Higgins, Wellesley, Ont., and Bonnie Wagler, Wellesley, Oct. 10.

Ratzlaff/Reece: Carol Ratzlaff, Buhler, Kan., and Robert Reece, Turon, Kan., Nov. 21 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Deaths

Godshall, Enos, 96, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 21. Spouse: Elizabeth Wambold Godshall (deceased). Parents: Enos and Barbara Booz Godshall (deceased). Survivors: children Richard, Robert, Merrill; 15 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kaiser, Darlene, 48, Comins, Mich., died Oct. 30 of a cerebral aneurysm. Spouse: John Kaiser (deceased). Survivor: daughter Josephine. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Mio, Mich.

Kauffman, Nona Miller, 100, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 16. Spouse: Amsa Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Gideon and Lydia Kenagy Miller (deceased). Survivors: children Miriam Byler, Naomi Lederach, Judy Kennel; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 19 at Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kuhns, Joe, 76, Plain City, Ohio, died Nov. 19. Spouse: Ada Gingerich Kuhns. Parents: Monroe and Fannie Miller Kuhns (deceased). Other survivors: children Ramona Detweiler, Veronica Johnson, Anthony Joe, Lisa Minshall; 14 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 23 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Stayrook, Joseph, 85, Belleville, Pa., died Nov. 18 of leukemia. Spouse: Mildred Harshbarger Stayrook. Parents: Reuben and Arie Yoder Stayrook (deceased). Other survivors: children Cynthia Taylor, Robert, Sharon Weaver, Sandra Confer; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Stoltzfus, Cletus, 59, Englewood, Colo., died Nov. 19 of heart failure. Spouse: Connie Hershberger Stoltzfus. Parents: Alvin and Magdalene Yoder Stoltzfus. Other survivors: children Lori Beckman, Vicki Scarboro; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 23 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Troester, Frank, 76, Surf City, N.J., died Nov. 16. Spouse: Alice Troester. Parents: Max Bruno and Luisa Schulyer Troester (deceased). Other survivors: children Frank, Gary, Sandra Blauch, Connie Bishop; stepchildren Emily and Donald Johnson, Peter and Candace Silverman; six grandchildren; three stepgrandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 19 at Doylestown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Wyse, Brittany Nicole, 14, Fayette, Ohio, died Nov. 16 of injuries received in a van and tractor accident. Parents: Scott and Carla Wyse. Other survivors: sister Danielle. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Wyse, Michael Taylor, 9, Fayette, Ohio, died Nov. 16 of injuries received in a van and tractor accident. Parents: Scott and Carla Wyse. Other survivors: sister, Danielle. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

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  For additional details or questions, contact Karen Nolt, search committee chair, 208-853-8725; email kjnolt@hotmail.com. Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship, 1520 N. 12th St., Boise, ID 83702.

- **Hinkletown Mennonite School** seeks ***administrator*** to begin June 1999. Qualifications include master's degree and minimum six years successful administrative and/or teaching experience. Training in school administration and possession of teaching certificate preferred. Candidate must be active member in an Anabaptist congregation. HMS serves 200 students in grades K-8 in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. Visit our student-produced website at http://home.ptd.net/~hmsstaff for more information about the school.

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Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Mennonite Central Committee Canada seeks applications for the position of

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is the chief executive officer of Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

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Please direct enquiries to Search Committee members:

John Wiens (chair) – (604) 434-5358
Pauline Hogan – (905) 688-0361
Willie Stoesz – (204) 377-4724
Ed Barkman – (204) 254-7734
Lori Unger Brandt – (204) 284-7881

Please direct applications to:

John Wiens
Executive Director Search Committee
c/o Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 5K9
Fax: (204) 269-9875

Review of applications will begin on January 31, 1999 and will continue until a suitable candidate is selected.

by Gordon Houser

While I talked with my niece at Thanksgiving, she recalled something she often heard during the weeks before Christmas when she worked at Wal-Mart. A mother with young children would comment, her voice laced with anxiety and exhaustion: "I hate this. Why am I doing this?"

Christmas shopping has become an annual event followed with such fervor that it rivals religious rituals throughout the world. Many stores, like Wal-Mart, Kmart and Target, opened their doors at 6 a.m. on Nov. 27, the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year. And crowds of people showed up. In Emporia, Kan., where I was visiting my mother, the newspaper reported that a woman lost her shoe in the rush of people but kept pushing through the crowd to get to whatever products she was after. In a store in another city, several men got into a fight over a Furby, the latest toy.

This is one more example of the sickness of consumerism that infects our society and becomes especially evident during the Christmas season. Even without going to the extremes noted above, we find it difficult to avoid the excessive gift-buying that goes on this time of year.

Last year, when my daughter asked me what I wanted for Christmas and I couldn't think of anything, I said, "Give me a drawing or a story that you've created." She did, and it was a wonderful gift.

My mother, who at 82 is long past the mode of accumulating and in the mode of getting rid of things, told us this year, "Don't give me anything I can't eat, drink or read." Sounds like good advice.

Another idea is to join the many who are giving relief kits and other aid to hurricane victims in Central America. There is no end to worthy organizations in need of funds.

A doctor friend reminded me that this is the time of year when many people become sick from flu, while others experience loneliness. A visit is a great gift.

From our readers: Robert J. Zani, Tennessee Colony, Texas, writes: "America has a culture that turns to consumerism in an attempt to calm our fears and insecurities—i.e., to replace God. ... Knowledge of today's media products and what passes for culture makes one vividly aware that the author of Ecclesiastes was as wise as wisdom itself."

Waiting for meaning

Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, ... for my eyes have seen your salvation.—Luke 2:29-30

I get nervous when my daughters see a TV commercial. This rarely happens, but when it does, I cringe in the same way another parent might cringe when their child hears swearing or sees graphic sex or violence in the media.

I don't like the rapidity of images. A 30-second ad for pop using 20 visual bits simply gives no time for thinking. It's all geared to stimulate. And I don't like the disjointedness of images. From people calling long distance to kids eating cereal to a disembodied head on a computer screen, the mix of imagery during a three-minute commercial break spells incoherence, especially to preschoolers.

When we digest greater doses of media imagery, our ability to find meaning in images diminishes. And this is fine for advertisers. Thinking about the meaning of ad imagery defuses the power and the glory of ads. Isaiah spoke to this by saying that when it comes to making and adoring idols, "no one stops to think."

During Christmastime, this topic makes me think of Simeon. While our society absorbs thousands of visual bits week after week, reaching saturation levels that wash away meaning, Simeon, who waited patiently year after year for a single, momentary sight, saw layers of meaning when he held the baby in his arms.

Simeon's prayer is full of aesthetic terms: sight, light, revelation, glory. Like Isaiah, whom he quotes, he was visually literate. He understood that God's incarnate truth reaches us through our senses. And this is what I want for my daughters. I want them to gain an aesthetic that defies meaning and uses imagery to affect how people spend their time and money.

Ted Lewis attends Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan.

films

Babe: Pig in the City (PG) is the sequel to the surprise hit from a couple of years ago that garnered an Oscar nomination for best picture. Not as fresh as the original but with improved special effects, this one follows a similar format, a fairy tale of unabashed goodness, with a narrator and the high-voiced mice introducing titled sections. Here the beloved Babe finds himself alone in a big city, a compilation of famous landmarks of New York, Los Angeles, Sydney, Toronto, Paris and others. He encounters good and bad dogs, a chorus of cats, a vaudeville act of chimps and an orangutan and wins them over with his "kind and steady heart." Babe's friend Ferdinand the duck returns for this go-round and once more brings the most laughs. Director George Miller has created a classic set of films that present goodness without ignoring the evils and perils of the world.

videos

Kolya is a Czech film by Jan Sverak that won the Oscar for best foreign-language film last year. A virtuoso cellist in Prague is left to care for a Russian boy (the title character) and finds redemption. A good example of a film (see "Movies & Films," Dec. 8), it works on several levels: as a poignant story as well as a parable about politics, language and faith.

Dr. Doolittle (PG-13) is clearly a "movie" and not for young children. But it is one of the funniest movies I've seen this year.

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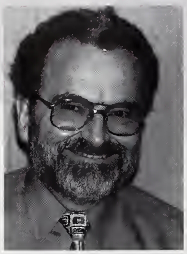

J. Lorne Peachey

Why bother with Mennonite?

We live in a post-denominational age. Every analysis I read these days of the 20th-century church says so. Denominational loyalty is a thing of the past.

One can argue about whether there's less loyalty to denominational labels today than was once true. What is different today is that the church has strong institutional public relations programs and publications such as this one making us more aware of the denomination to which we belong and what it is attempting to do. Plus, for members of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church, the coming merger also heightens our awareness of our denomination and its goals and structures.

Why are we putting so much time and energy into being Mennonite—in spite of the analysis that this is a post-denominational age?

Church historian Martin E. Marty has said that if we didn't have denominations now, we'd soon be inventing them. There's something about association that we all need. The natural state of the church is to be in relationship, not to go it alone. Instinctively we know we can only be faithful together, as a whole, not as individual parts.

Association is in our genes. We cannot be the church alone. The question is what kind of association we need to do the work to which we believe God has called us.

History seems to agree. Congregations that go off on their own soon die out, if not in the first generation, at least by the third. I've also found it fascinating to observe that when individual congregations or groups of congregations say they no longer need their denominational affiliation, most often they end up realigning themselves with another group, one often diametrically opposed to the denomination they have left. Thus individuals or congregations can embrace militarism, for example, if they find support for their views on biblical inerrancy. Or they respond warmly to a new group with a strong emphasis on missions, never mind that the members of that group are predominantly wealthy.

The question today is not whether it's important to belong to a denomination. The question is whether this association of churches called Mennonite is the one to which we want to belong. Does God have a calling for us that's different from that of other groups? Is this calling worth the time and energy needed to develop and maintain denominational structures?

In the past we have answered yes. That yes came because we believed it important to promote distinctive values that we believe in, such as peace and justice. While we have a long way to go to put beliefs into practice, increasingly other Christians are dialoguing with us about how to live out Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. Mennonites are also becoming known for people who have developed ways of working at mediation and conflict resolution.

We also have a reputation for solid programs for helping those in need. The latest example is the Mennonite Central Committee campaign to provide relief kits for hurricane victims in Central America. Every day I hear new stories, not only about our church's response, but also about the actions this campaign has generated in other groups: a company donating 10,000 buckets, a Catholic congregation filling 200 and bringing them to the local Mennonite church, a public high school teacher who manages to get her class to work on the project with "no one raising the church-state issue."

There are other values we Mennonites hold dear: family, community, simplicity, humility. Are they values we believe to be important enough to keep us together for the future?

During this time of merger, when all things have a possibility for change, that is a question facing us all—individuals, congregations, conferences. The question will become more acute in the next months as we continue to work on vision, mission, membership and structures for the new integrated Mennonite Church.

Why bother with Mennonite? We are going to "bother" with something. Association is in our genes as Christians. We cannot be the church alone. The question is what kind of association we need to do the work to which we believe God has called us. For me it continues to be Mennonite.—*jlp*

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December 22, 1998

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8 Web site mobilizes support in crises
9 Hurricane Mitch aid far surpasses goals
16 Darkness amid the Christmas lights

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Come again

I was surprised to see Readers Say responses taking issue with the Nov. 3 editorial ("Might the Second Be Like the First?"). I thought it had keen insight and brought a new perspective to the second coming of Christ. I was encouraged by the observation that the first time around the Messiah didn't come as was expected, so why shouldn't we be surprised by the second coming? I thought there was material there for at least one Advent sermon. The editorial certainly gave me food for productive musing. Thank you for thinking creatively and challenging readers to do the same.—*Jeni Hiett Umble, Elkhart, Ind.*

Integration ideas

In all the noise generated by the discussion of the homosexual issue, one missing element is a workable plan on what to do about member congregations once a merger happens. What happens to congregations which have been expelled from the Mennonite Church but retain their membership in the General Conference Mennonite Church?

I suggest we listen to Paul Schrag of *Mennonite Weekly Review*. He has proposed merging the churches but those congregations that have been disciplined still be included as associate members in the new church. Since they are not in agreement with church statements of faith, they should not be considered full members. At the same time, to cut off dialogue goes against almost every other recommendation or action that has come out of the discussion of this issue. Those congregations would be considered associate members until such time that God's leading would be made clearer to all of us. Associate membership would mean simply that, not a probationary or punitive dangling-sword status.

I sincerely hope that a people of peace would come up with a plan that would demonstrate God's leading instead of power politics or selfish interests on either side.—*Brian Stucky, Goessel, Kan.*

This is not written in cynicism about integration. Nor do I lack appreciation for the good leadership. But I sure could get more excited about integration efforts if I knew the energies and arguments were about revitalizing the spiritual life and local mission of each Mennonite congregation.—*Duane Beck, Elkhart, Ind.*

Political decisions

The Mennonite tradition of being nonpolitical is a political decision. It has served us well in the context of bountiful resources. Being a giving people has been the right thing. But that context is rapidly changing. Trees, soil and water are being depleted worldwide. Who benefits from resource exploitation is also a political decision.

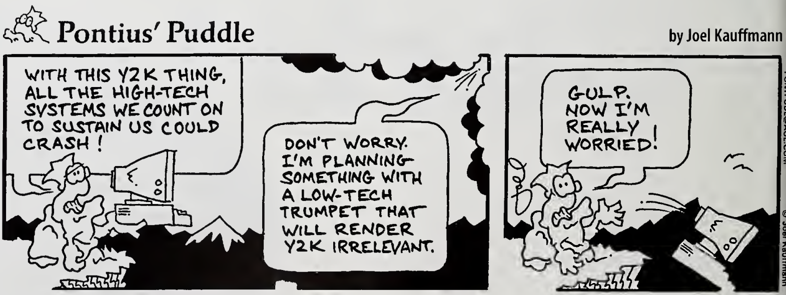
Being a giving people is still a right thing to be. But so is being less of a taking (consumer) people. Even better is to advocate increased access to resources for the world's poor and decrease our own share. Since becoming a Christian, I voted for the first time this year. I intend to write letters congratulating those who won, explaining why I did or did not vote for them and mentioning my key issues. My guess is that giving my power in this way to those who cannot or do not vote is far more valuable to God than just giving money.—*Keith Hess, San Salvador, El Salvador*

Sinners and science

The Nov. 24 issue presents an interesting contrast between the Readers Say letter from Ruth Eitzen and the Speaking Out column by

Pontius' Puddle

by Joel Kauffmann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readers say

Martha Kolb-Wyckoff. Eitzen writes of those "who are voted to be certified sinners" while Kolb-Wyckoff reminds us that we are all sinners. Since we are all sinners, it seems logical to speak of those whose favorite activities are voted to be certified sin by some majorities within some parts of the church. I am old enough to remember when such voting was called "discernment" and was thought to be an improvement over decision making by small groups of people in leadership positions. Today it appears that discernment is only valid when the results align with the dictates of secular political correctness.

It is difficult to commune together as sinners at the foot of the cross when some demand unqualified approval for their favorite activities while others cannot give that approval without violating their conscience and understanding of Scripture.—*John M. Eby, Pennsville, N.J.*

I am of the opinion that homosexuality is the result of arrested development of areas of the brain. A number of autopsies of the brains of homosexuals show their hypothalamus and hippocampus—which regulate endocrine secretion and control emotions and body temperature—were reduced in size.

If you believe God created humans in God's image, should we condemn those with arrested development, visible or invisible? We do not exclude those born with a visible defect such as a deformed leg or arm or a cleft palate.

I am surprised at the hatred of some who claim to be Christians and yet can be so cruel to gays and lesbians. Is it possible for us to turn to Christ's teachings in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God"? Let those of us who are not homosexual be thankful, and let us be considerate and compassionate to those who are in the homosexual group.—*Edwin M. Harms, North Newton, Kan.*

Cover photo
by Marilyn Nolt

Jesus and Hero

two kinds of kings

The tidings of Jesus' birth are tidings of a new expression of God's abundant mercy and healing.

by Ted Grimsrud

Often in the story of Jesus we see conflict: in how King Herod responded to the news of Jesus' birth (the slaughter of the innocents); in how the people in his hometown sought to throw him over a cliff; in his conflict with religious leaders throughout his ministry; when Jesus is executed by the Roman empire as a political criminal labeled "king of the Jews."

Why did Jesus' way of life—one from all accounts peaceable and loving—lead to such conflict?

At the time of Jesus' birth, wise men from the East visited King Herod (Matthew 2). They asked, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?"

Jesus' way of abundance threatened those who thought in terms of scarcity. When we assume scarcity, we simply won't know the generosity of God for what it is.

When Herod heard this, he was frightened. He summoned the religious leaders to ask where the "anointed one" was to be born. Herod knew he was not the divinely anointed king of the Jews, even though he publicly claimed that role.

Herod knew his status as ruler was tenuous. He gained and maintained his power through brute force and political manipulation. He had little support from the common people around Jerusalem. Discontent with his rule was so high that a small spark could create a firestorm of revolution. Herod lived in constant fear—no matter how many enemies he tortured and executed, he knew their number continued to grow.

Herod asked the wise men to stop on their way back and let him know where this special child was so he could "also go and pay him homage." The wise men found Jesus and gave him gifts. Then they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod. Jesus' father Joseph also was warned, so he took Jesus and Mary away. They fled to Egypt and stayed there several years, until Herod died.

When Herod realized the wise men had tricked him, he was furious. "He sent for and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under" (Matthew 2:16). This was only the latest of his extraordinary acts of brutality. Earlier he had his two oldest sons murdered because he feared they were plotting against him.

This tragic story is an introduction the entire story of Jesus.

Jesus exposed the violence of power politics. He exposed the violence that lies all too close to the hearts of all of us. He goes on to show us that God's merciful kingdom is available right now to break this spiral of violence.

The story of Jesus is about the presence of God's healing mercy in human history. This mercy enters a world of conflict. It is because we have so much conflict that we so desperately need God's mercy.

Jesus, even at his birth, exposes the violence of King Herod. Alongside Jesus' birth story, the joyful song of God-with-us, comes another song, a terrible song: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more" (Matthew 2:18). Such lamentations have too often been a part of human history before and since Jesus' birth. His birth, though, signals a new hope that Herod's violence may be overcome.

Scarcity and abundance: Do we think of the basic stuff of life—from food and shelter to a sense of competence and of being loved—as scarce, something we have to fight for, grasp for, hoard, protect at all costs? Or is the basic stuff of life abundant? Can we trust in God's provision for our needs? Can we be generous and peaceable, holding onto things loosely and with an attitude of sharing?

In his life and teaching, Jesus showed that scarcity is an illusion. He showed that abundance is real, that we may, like the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, trust God for our

Religious News Service

"The Adoration" by American artist Jane Palermo

The wise men found Jesus and gave him gifts. Then they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod.

needs in life. Jesus rejects the scarcity assumption and assumes abundance.

The tidings of Jesus' birth are tidings of a new expression of God's abundant mercy and healing. Herod's response is fear (Matthew 2:3). Out of fear, people with brute power do brutish things.

Most conflicts accept the assumptions of scarcity. We fight to protect our scarce resources. We justify all sorts of violence in the name of protecting something we are afraid to lose—prestige, wealth, purity, God's acceptance. But when we rely on force, on winners and losers, we end up with a series of battles, an eye taken for an eye until every eye is blind.

For Jesus, conflict is different. It arises when those assuming scarcity cannot accept abundance. Jesus' way of abundance threatened those who thought in terms of scarcity. When we assume scarcity, we simply won't know the generosity of God for what it is.

Jesus proclaimed that love is abundant in the very nature of things. That is how God has made and sustains the universe. We need only accept God's love and trust in God's abundant mercy. This simple trust, though, requires a radical change in our consciousness, a conversion—from the fearful, clenched-hand world of scarcity to the courageous, open-handed world of abundance.

Several years ago, I was eating lunch with a friend whose office was located in a rough part of town, not too far from the railroad tracks. A hobo had come by to see my friend a few days earlier with a tape deck he had found and wanted to sell for $20. My friend said maybe, but first he'd check to make sure it wasn't stolen. When I was there, the hobo stopped by to see if my friend could buy the deck. My friend said the deck was OK, and he gave the fellow the money. The guy's face lit up and he left, heading for a nearby grocery store. He came back a few minutes later with a gift for each of us, a bottle of soda and a pastry he had bought with his new store of wealth. He could not think of hoarding, only sharing.

Two kinds of kings: King Jesus taught that abundance means rejecting dividing people into insiders and outsiders or limiting God's mercy and love. God's kingdom is for all people. Jesus ate with tax collectors and other "sinners," forgave the woman caught in adultery and promised paradise to the criminal on the cross next to him. Jesus received all who wanted to come.

Jesus was a genuine threat to King Herod, to the religious leaders and to the Roman empire. He approached life with an entirely different script from that of scarcity and grasping and fearfulness. Jesus wrote a revolutionary script of trust, acceptance, openness and mercy. Anyone who genuinely hears Jesus' word will no longer find it possible to accept Herod's definition of reality but will give homage to an altogether different kind of king: the peaceable king, Jesus.

King Jesus taught that abundance means rejecting dividing people into insiders and outsiders or limiting God's mercy and love.

Ted Grimsrud teaches theology at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. This article is based on sermons preached while pastor at Eugene (Ore.) Mennonite Church and Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Advent reflections

Death on Christmas Day

by Ann Grosh-King

Was I willing to spoil my day with another's misery? Was I willing to serve this woman and her family even on Christmas Day?

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.—Luke 2:6-7

I will never forget our first Christmas in Ethiopia. Our "home" was carved out of a grain warehouse. Jerry, my husband, directed the feeding center, and I provided nursing care at the clinic as well as for people staying in shelters on our compound. We saw sickness, malnutrition and death until we felt we had absorbed as much pain as we were able. We felt helpless to do much, but we tried to be willing to carry people's hurts in our hearts.

Western Christmas was coming (Ethiopians celebrate Christmas on Jan. 7), and we were looking forward to some relief and at least one day of rest. I needed a day with no responsibilities, no interruptions. We had saved canned foods with which to make a special Christmas lunch. I planned to read and maybe write some letters and to enjoy just being with Jerry. But it wasn't to be.

On Christmas Day I heard the crunching of stones, then a knock at the door. A woman waited there, carried by neighbors on a bed of skin supported by poles. They had walked up to our 9,000-foot ridge from the valley below. The woman was pregnant, soon ready to deliver, they said, and in a coma. We took her into our small, basic clinic, and I examined her. I could feel the baby's head in the birth canal. Then the woman died. She was only in the clinic 10 minutes.

I was angry with the men who brought her. Why didn't they bring her sooner? I was angry with the woman for dying with the unborn baby still within her. I was angry most of all that she had to come on Christmas Day, the day I had planned for my emotional refueling, a day to celebrate life and the gift of Jesus, not death, especially not a death in my clinic. I had no room in my heart for this woman on this day.

Christmas is a generous love-gift to a dying world that must be continually disappointing to God.

—Ann Grosh-King

As the day wore on, I wondered why I had thought Christmas Day should only be for life, for good things, for happy thoughts with no room for pain or hurt. Where had I gotten such an idea? How could I have been so protected? Was I willing to spoil my day with another's misery? Was I willing to serve this woman and her family even on Christmas Day?

It's only now, years later, that I understand God gave me a gift that day in the form of a dying woman. This gift shattered my illusions about what I thought Christmas should be. This gift helped me see in a new way that Christmas is a generous love-gift to a dying world that must be continually disappointing to God. This gift challenged me to have room in my heart and in my plans to serve those who are sent to me at Christmas. Today this gift is helping me celebrate Christmas.

Ann King-Grosh is from Lebanon, Pa., where she is a member of Gingrich Mennonite Church.

Learning to receive

We have much to learn from the faith traditions of aboriginals in North America.

by Renton Amell

Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.
—Matthew 2:11

This is the time of year for gift giving. The wise men were certainly not the first gift givers, but their gifts to the infant Jesus set the path for generations to come. The wise men were not from the same tradition as Jesus; they were not Hebrews. Yet they had a revelation from God that here was an important baby, to be the leader of an emerging faith, and they brought gifts to him. You could also say they brought gifts to Christianity. At the very least they provided us with one of the treasured and enduring images of Christmas.

Many of us Christians have trouble accepting gifts. For some reason we think it's not right to accept things from others. Perhaps it is North American individualism, a sense that we should be able to take care of ourselves. Perhaps it is a sense of superiority. After all, if I accept a gift from others, it is an admission that I can't do it all.

It's not surprising, then, that despite the early acceptance of gifts from other traditions, the Christian church seems unwilling to accept gifts from other spiritual understandings today. In several years of contact with aboriginal Canadians, for example, I have concluded that they have spiritual understandings that could enrich our Christian understanding of God. Unfortunately, we seem hesitant to accept these gifts.

I am convinced that God was being revealed in what we call North America long before Europeans arrived. I am further convinced that the inhabitants of this part of the world came to know well some aspects of God during that time and that the recent 500 years of contact with people of European descent has not entirely erased that understanding of God.

My aboriginal friends and others have convinced me that what we European-North Americans call justice is not the only thing that can be called justice. Aboriginal justice is much more closely tied to restoring community wholeness than to punishing a wrongdoer. They clearly define the action as wrong but understand that the individual who committed the action remains an important part of the community. In this context, justice means to restore wholeness to the circle of the community.

Contrast this with our current justice system, which focuses on removing the offender from the community and labeling him or her a criminal. This frequently has nothing to do with restoring wholeness to the community. We can learn from aboriginal people's understandings about community wholeness.

My aboriginal friends also have a deep understanding of the connectedness of all life. Different from the broader society's concept of dominion, the aboriginal understanding sees each part of the creation as dependent on all other parts. Many aboriginal people offer a prayer of thanksgiving, for example, each time they kill a moose or collect natural medicines in the forest. They understand that what they are harvesting is giving up its life so that people might live. Giving of life is sacred and not to be taken lightly.

How different is that from our concept of dominion? When we slaughter beef, do we have a sense of the loss of that animal's life, a life created by God? When we toss our newspapers into the garbage, do we understand all the ways we depend on the trees that make that newsprint? A sense of the connectedness of all life is a second gift we might receive from our aboriginal neighbors.

Do you suppose Mary and Joseph were surprised to receive gifts from the wise men? Those gifts glorified God, even though they came from people who were not Jewish. In this season of gift giving, are we prepared to receive gifts from different faith expressions that will help us better glorify God? Let us open our eyes and minds to the gifts around us.

Renton Amell serves as a community development worker in Kenora, Ont. He is a member of Knox United Church in Kenora.

In this season of gift giving, are we prepared to receive gifts from different faith expressions that will help us better glorify God?

A place for the global church to meet

MWC web site can mobilize support in times of crisis

STRASBOURG, France—Hector Mondragon is in hiding. And Mennonite World Conference (MWC) wants everyone to know about it.

Mondragon, a Colombian Mennonite, is a consultant on economic and territorial matters with an organization which advocates for indigenous people. He has been advising one group in their dispute with the Colombian government over the building of a hydroelectric dam that has destroyed traditional fishing areas. As a result of his work, Mondragon has received death threats against him and his children. The family is now in hiding and may have to leave the country.

A plea for Mondragon, his family and the people he works with is one of the first prayer requests to be posted on Mennonite World Conference's (MWC) new web site—www.mwc-cmm.org. The international prayer exchange, one of the site's features, is intended to establish a worldwide network of information and support.

"We want the site to be more than an electronic brochure for MWC," says executive secretary Larry Miller. "We hope it can become a meeting place for churches around the world."

The prayer exchange, a ministry of MWC's Global Anabaptist Peace and Justice Network, provides a place for national churches or related peace groups to call their religious sisters and brothers around the globe to intercessory prayer for specific situations. The feature also includes ways for those who respond to let those making the requests know that prayers are being raised on their behalf.

MWC president Mesach Krisetya, a church leader in the troubled nation of Indonesia, knows how important the information superhighway can be to believers in times of crisis.

"In Indonesia, our fears of persecution are shrinking as a result of the growing sense of community made possible by technology," he said at a recent conference on "Unity and Mission With Suffering Churches." "When our persecution has been at the greatest, we reach out through email, and within minutes we are receiving support that encourages and reminds us that we are part of a larger family that cares."

In addition to the prayer exchange, the MWC site includes news and testimonies, a directory of MWC members and publications for sale.

The site was designed free by Mennonite Resources Network, a collaborative ministry of Franconia and Eastern District conferences. Says Franconia Conference coordinator Phil Bergey, "Our work together seems like an obvious outgrowth of our ministry."—*MWC News Service*

> **Our fears of persecution are shrinking as a result of the growing sense of community made possible by technology.**
>
> —*Mesach Krisetya*

Mennonite pushes WCC to proclaim nonviolence

HARARE, Zimbabwe—Fernando Ens was not going to let the matter rest.

At the World Council of Churches' assembly in Harare Dec. 13-15, Ens, a German Mennonite theology student, had earlier submitted a written proposal that WCC proclaim 2000-2010 as the "Decade to Overcome Violence." The proposal, however, had been referred to a committee.

So at the next-to-last plenary session of the assembly, Ens took the floor. Acknowledging that he might be out of order, he insisted that the gathered delegates, not a committee, make a decision on his proposal—and do so immediately.

With little discussion, an estimated 80 percent to 90 percent of the delegates approved the measure. While WCC does not endorse absolute pacifism, it has in recent years raised critical questions about the "just war" perspective.

Also during the assembly, which celebrated WCC's 50th anniversary, Ens became the first Mennonite elected to the organization's 150-member Central Committee, or governing body.

Of the 339 WCC member churches, only three are Mennonite: from northern Germany, the Netherlands and Congo. Also present at the Harare assembly were Mennonite World Conference general secretary Larry Miller and MWC president Mesach Krisetya, plus a handful of visitors, mostly organized by Mennonite Central Committee.—*Tom Finger*

Church mission fest raises $177,000

In one of the largest congregational mission festivals in the United States, First Mennonite Church in Berne, Ind., raised nearly $177,000 Nov. 21-29, exceeding the budgeted goal of $160,000.

The money will go for a variety of domestic and international causes, including the Commission on Overseas Mission, Conference of Mennonites in Canada's Native Ministries, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Youth With a Mission and Navigators. Funds were also raised to support a Central District Conference congregation and several Berne-area ministries.

Two volunteers, both named Ruth Weaver, pack hurricane relief kits at the Mennonite Central Committee Material Resource Center in Ephrata, Pa. MCC has so far received 50,000 kits for victims of Hurricane Mitch, far exceeding MCC's original goals. Contributors have also given $2.7 million.

Supporters surpass MCC's goals for hurricane aid, but long-term relief work remains to be done

AKRON, Pa.—From buckets to bucks, North Americans have flooded Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) with assistance as the agency, in response to Hurricane Mitch's devastation in Central America, continues one of its largest relief efforts in recent years.

Supporters have answered MCC's call for 20,000 hurricane relief kits by filling 50,000 kits, and more are arriving daily at MCC offices and warehouses across the continent. The kits include items such as combs, toothbrushes and soap packed into five-gallon buckets.

"This has spilled over to public schools, civic groups, other denominations," says Kevin King, material resources manager. "It's unbelievable."

Says Linda Shelly, MCC's Latin America director: "Our partners [in Central America] are delighted that the number of hurricane relief kits keeps rising. They say they can use as many relief kits as we prepare."

MCC has already sent 14,000 kits to Honduras and Nicaragua. Another batch is scheduled to be airlifted shortly before Christmas.

A Massachusetts plastics company, which found news of MCC's hurricane response on the Internet, donated 10,000 buckets for the relief kits. MCC's purchase of more than 23,000 Spanish-language Bibles to add to the kits has nearly depleted the American Bible Society's inventory.

Meanwhile, constituents have already contributed $2.7 million in cash. MCC workers had earlier estimated $1 million would be needed to meet requests for assistance in the region. In addition to the hurricane relief kits, MCC has to date given $225,952 for medicine, food and as grants to churches and church agencies in the region.

"We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our constituents," says executive director Ronald J.R. Mathies. "The need in Central America is very great. This is one of the largest relief efforts undertaken by MCC in recent years, and we are thankful for the contributions."

MCC is planning for a three- to five-year response, meaning there is still more to do. "We anticipate rebuilding homes destroyed or damaged by Mitch," says overseas director Ray Brubacher. "We also want to help farmers clean debris from their fields and to give them seeds and tools so they can again begin growing their own food."

MCC, in conjunction with partners in Honduras and Nicaragua, will be sending work teams to help clean and rebuild. The plan is to send groups of five to eight people from the United States and Canada to work with five to eight Central Americans for two weeks. The schedule calls for sending teams to Honduras each Saturday, starting in mid-December, for the next six to 12 months. Work teams will start going to Nicaragua in 1999.

The teams will be expected to pay their own transportation and in-country costs as well as cover their own medical costs and insurance.

In the wake of Mitch's toll, MCC is also urging the United States, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and others to cancel the debts owed by Honduras and Nicaragua. Honduras owes the United States $148 million; Nicaragua owes $106 million. The United States has agreed to suspend debt payments for two years, but without debt cancellation, this will only extend the countries' indebtedness, says Martin Shupack of the MCC U.S. Washington Office.—*MCC News Service with Rich Preheim and Mary Lou Cummings*

The homeless man's mite for relief work

Mennonite Central Committee's West Coast regional office in Reedley, Calif., recently received a $1 contribution, accompanied by a note from a pastor describing the unique gift.

"Last Sunday a homeless person came to see me," the pastor wrote. "I always try to give some assistance to people in these circumstances, and I take the opportunity to talk to them about someone who may need their help.

"I mentioned that we were helping people in need in Honduras and Nicaragua —people affected by Hurricane Mitch. This immediately touched his heart, because his name was Mitchell. This dollar is his contribution."—*MCC News Service*

Nepal workers reflect on ministry

Ed and Ethel Metzler

ELKHART, Ind.—During their eight years in Kathmandu, Nepal, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers Ed and Ethel Metzler planted many seeds, both in their work and in their garden.

When the Metzlers ended their work in the Hindu country earlier this year, they gave away 150 plants from the garden around their home before returning to the United States.

This summer, Ed concluded his assignment as executive director of United Mission to Nepal (UNM), a mission partnership of more than 40 church-related organizations, including MBM. Ethel was a psychotherapist, serving expatriate and Nepali clients.

The Metzlers left a country that has undergone immense change since they arrived. Nepal is the only official Hindu kingdom in the world. But as a result of a 1990 democratic revolution, it is now legal to voluntarily change religion. There are now as many as 300,000 Christians in the country.

For decades, building hospitals and developing rural areas were ways to spread the message of Christ. Every place UNM has done a project now has a church. "It's been a way Christians have been able to demonstrate God's concern for the total needs of people," Ed says.

UNM, with 300 expatriates from 16 countries and 2,000 Nepali staff members, is finding new ways to improve the lives of people in the country. The agency spends nearly $10 million a year on education, appropriate technology, industrial and rural development and health services. But now UNM is finding ways to work with Nepali people and encourage them to do the projects, Ed says.

Ethel worked with Christians and people from other religions who were struggling with the dilemmas of a rapidly changing cultural scene where the old caste and ethnic boundaries are eroding. She also listened to people struggling in marriage or family situations—stories similar to the ones she heard while previously working in Elkhart. "The problem areas are the same. The solutions are often different," she says.

Ed says he hopes for continued development in the country and continued strengthening of the rapidly growing church. "Mennonites and other Christians should continue to partner with Nepalis in their journey toward faith and meeting their basic needs," he says. "We can't convert anybody. That's God's work."—*Marshall V. King for MBM News Service*

Correction: Three hundred fifty people spent 24 hours praying for Mennonite Board of Missions prior to a November centennial celebration, not 35 as reported in the Dec. 15 *The Mennonite.*

Stewardship educators make plans to start over

SAFETY HARBOR, Fla.—Faced with the question of how to teach stewardship in the integrated Mennonite Church, two organizations now doing such education have agreed to start over, beginning with a September 1999 summit.

Ten representatives from the Churchwide Stewardship Council and the Giving Project made the decision at their first meeting together Dec. 4-5. The council includes representatives from all General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church area conferences, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and church-related institutions. The Giving Project is a joint GC-MC stewardship education program.

The September summit is to include representatives from each GC and MC area conference. At least one of each conference's representatives should be a person of color or a woman if the other is white or male.

The guideline for racial and gender representation grew out of a challenge from five women at the Mennonite Church's 1997 General Assembly in Orlando, Fla., who asked why the Giving Project's steering committee was all male. Rather than adding women as a response, the Giving Project planners decided to invite women and people of color to be part of the planning for the next phase of stewardship education.—*J. Lorne Peachey*

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MCC U.S. grant aids MDS work in Puerto Rico

AIBONITO, Puerto Rico—Mennonite Central Committee U.S. has awarded a $25,000 grant to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) to support reconstruction efforts in Puerto Rico. The island was hit Sept. 21 when Hurricane Georges swept through the Caribbean.

MDS is working in Aibonito and Coamo, Mennonite communities in the central part of the island. The grant helped pay for an electric generator for Academia Menonita Betania, a Mennonite school in Aibonito, allowing the school to remain open after Georges cut power for several weeks. The funding will also be used for rebuilding roofs and repairing homes.

Volunteers continue to arrive as MDS plans to maintain a long-term presence on the island.—*MCC News Service*

Mennonite mutual funds may come to Canada

WINNIPEG—A group of Canadian Mennonites in the next few months will draft a business plan for a Mennonite mutual fund. While Mennonite Mutual Aid has offered Praxis, its socially responsible mutual fund, in the United States for several years, there has been no such fund available in Canada.

"Anabaptists and others in the Christian faith are realizing that where and how they invest says a lot about what they believe to be important," says Mark Weber of Ontario-based Mennonite Savings and Credit Union.
—*Canadian Mennonite*

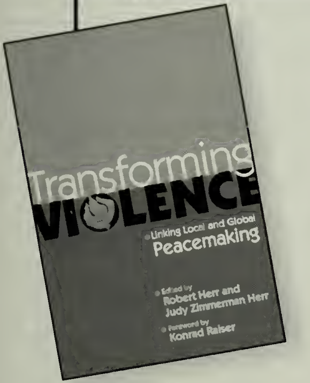
AMBS seminar explores pastors and friendship

ELKHART, Ind.—While conventional wisdom says pastors should seek their friendships outside their congregations, successful pastors break those rules but do so with openness and intentionality, a recent speaker said at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart.

"Research says pastors do have friends in their congregations. It does work. It is beneficial," said John Hershberger, an AMBS adjunct faculty member in pastoral counseling, who led a seminar on "Pastors: Friendship and Loneliness."

by the way ...

The first Mennonite women's mission society was organized in Danzig, Prussia, in 1848.—*A People of Mission*



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EASTERN MENNONITE SEMINARY
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Births

Blank, Bethany Rose, Nov. 29, to Marcus and Norma (Lehner) Blank, Chambersburg, Pa.

Brenneman, Danielle Dehaven, Nov. 10, to Kevin and Tonya (Ross) Brenneman, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Glick, Levi James, Oct. 24, to Darla (Wisseman) and James Glick, Salem, Ore.

Higgins, Jason, Oct. 25, to Brett and Joanne (Bean) Higgins, Plattsville, Ont.

Kehler, Matthias Samuel, Oct. 19, to Diane (Simon) and Eric Kehler, Columbus, Ohio.

Long, Chloe Hostetler, Oct. 12, to Gary and Julie (Hostetler) Long, Columbus, Ohio.

Lyndaker, McKailey Anne, Oct. 29, to Larry and Sandra (Steckly) Lyndaker, Castorland, N.Y.

VanPelt, Jordan Anthony, Nov. 23, to Joy (Brenneman) and Steve VanPelt, Lancaster, Pa.

Wenger, Elise Mariel, Nov. 25, to Curt and Sherry (Millenger) Wenger, Goshen, Ind.

Woods-Yee, Michael Douglas Joseph Alexander, Oct. 29, to Michael and Victoria Woods-Yee, Columbus, Ohio.

Yoder, Evan Denis, Nov. 25, to Amanda (Dutton) and Stephen Yoder, Lawrence, Kan.

Youndt, Brynn Taylor, Oct. 15, to Amy (Zimmerman) and Vincent Youndt, Stevens, Pa.

Marriages

Brenner/Graybill: Sarah Brenner, Shannon, Ill., and Donald Graybill, Dakota, Ill., Nov. 7 at Freeport (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Cook/Cooper: Glenn Cook, Buffalo, N. Y., and Rebecca Cooper, Leola, Pa., Oct. 11 at Neffsville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Diggs/Mininger: Dorrie Diggs, Susquehanna, Pa., and Mark Mininger, Pocomoke City, Md., Nov. 28 at Lakeview Mennonite Church, Susquehanna.

Dillon/Sawyer: Eugene Dillon, Newport News, Va., and Maxine Sawyer, Portsmouth, Va., Nov. 16 at Portsmouth.

Ford/Martin: Martha Jorene Ford, Dayton, Va., and Richard Martin, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 28 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Fortner/Moss: Christie Fortner, Freeport, Ill., and Steve Moss, Freeport, Oct. 31 at Freeport Mennonite Church.

Fuller/Yoder: John Fuller, Newport News, Va., and Shawn Yoder, Newport News, Nov. 28 at Warwick River Mennonite, Newport News.

Halliday/Weber: Stephanie Halliday, Ephrata, Pa., and Jeffrey Weber, Ephrata, Nov. 14, at Ephrata.

Hammer/Myers: Jon Hammer, Allentown, Pa., and Jolene Myers, Allentown, Nov. 28 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Heatwole/Stoneburner: Susan Heatwole, Silver Spring, Md., and Brian Stoneburner, Goldsboro, N.C., Oct. 17 at Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church.

Higgins/Wagler: Rick Higgins, Wellesley, Ont., and Bonnie Wagler, Wellesley, Oct. 10 at Wilmot Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont.

Kropf/Yordy: Lester Kropf, Albany, Ore., and Ruth Yordy, St. Jacobs, Ont., Nov. 7.

Lehman/Martinez: Stephanie Lehman, Kidron, Ohio, and Carlos Martinez, Orrville, Ohio, Nov. 7 at Living Water Church, Dalton, Ohio.

Noonan/Smoker: Jennifer Noonan, San Jose, Calif., and Lonnie Smoker, Intercourse, Pa., Nov. 14 at Washington (D. C.) Community Fellowship.

Shenk/Watkins: Dale Shenk, Newport News, Va., and Kitty Watkins, Smithfield, Va., Nov. 14 at Newport News.

Deaths

Amstutz, Delphine Maude Berg, 83, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Nov. 23. Spouse: Ira Amstutz (deceased). Parents: Phillip and Rosena Moser Berg (deceased). Survivors: children Robert Klopfenstein, Rose Marie Biddier, Rhoda Imhoff, Gloria Landes, Glenn, Donna Johnson, Elliot; 17 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

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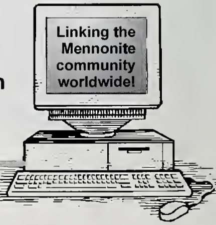
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Bowman, Viola Berkey, 97, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 10. Spouse: Elmer Bowman (deceased). Parents: Milo and Salina Yoder Berkey (deceased). Survivors: children Doris Yoder, Anna; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Goshen.

Breneman, Earl, 79, Lancaster, Pa., died Nov. 24. Spouse: Elizabeth Landis Breneman. Parents: Charles and Flora Eshelman Breneman (deceased). Other survivors: children Doris Jean Meehan, Donald, Joanne Showalter; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild; one foster great-granddaughter. Memorial service: Nov. 28 at New Danville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Gingerich, Eli, 70, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 20. Spouse: Rosalee Schrock Gingerich. Parents: Lando and Verna Hershberger Gingerich (deceased). Other survivors: children LuAnn Stampfler, Eric, Kevin, Steven; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 23 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hunsecker, Harold, 81, Chambersburg, Pa., died Nov. 28. Spouse: Alice Hunsecker. Other survivors: children Clair, Carolyn Durst; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Chambersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hunsicker, Paul, 92, Sellersville, Pa., died Nov. 25 of metastic lung cancer. Spouse: Helen Plank Hunsicker (deceased). Parents: Leidy and Della Moyer Hunsicker (deceased). Survivors: children Shirley Rose, Alice Smith; five grandchildren; three stepgrandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kremer, Anna McWilliams, 99, Milford, Neb., died Dec. 1. Spouse: Amos Kremer (deceased). Parents: Charles and Anna McWilliams Kremer (deceased). Survivors: stepchildren Clyde, Hazel Stutzman, Margie Springer; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 3 at Lincoln, Neb.

Martin, Minerva Hoffman, 81, Elmira, Ont., died Nov. 20 of a stroke. Spouse: Onias Martin. Parents: Daniel and Maryann Bauman Hoffman (deceased). Other survivors: children Gordon Scheifele, Willard Scheifele, Joy Scheifele, Pearl Jutzi; 11 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 25 at St. Jacobs, Ont.

McGallicher, Lydia Auker, 86, Akron, Pa., died Nov. 27. Spouse: Melvin McGallicher (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Lizzie Gehman Auker (deceased). Survivors: children Elvin, Marvin, Kathryn Nolt, Grace; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

McKinney, Norvell, 81, Cartersville, Va., died Oct. 15 of cancer. Spouse: Auldine Ball McKinney. Parents: Joseph and Malinda McKinney (deceased). Other survivors: children Zane, Ofa Johnson; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchldren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Powhatan, Va.

Miller, Ada Frye, 78, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 28 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Ervin Miller (deceased). Survivors: children Joyce Haarer, Shirley Neumann, Larry, Stanley, Terry; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Goshen.

Risser, Leah, 93, Lancaster, Pa., died Nov. 9. Parents: Aaron and Laura Horst Risser (deceased). Funeral: Nov. 13 at Lancaster.

Ruhl, Esther, 86, Mount Joy, Pa., died Nov. 23. Spouse: Arthur Ruhl (deceased). Parents: Monroe and Ida Mae Witmer Ebersole (deceased). Survivors: children Joann Wetzel, Gerald; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27 at Mount Joy.

Smith, Willard, 98, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 17. Spouse: Verna Graber Smith (deceased). Parents: John and Katie Smith Smith (deceased). Funeral: Nov. 21 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Stover, Elizabeth, 84, Palmyra, Pa., died Nov. 16. Parents: Henry and Leah Stover (deceased). Memorial service: Nov. 21 at Palmyra.

Take your first step toward ministry

Susan Wheeler, a nurse midwife from Monte Vista, Colo., felt a call to ministry. She believed that learning and living in a Mennonite community of faith was important for nurturing her call. That's why she came to Hesston College.

"At first it was a big step of faith for me to trust that God has a ministry for me. I had loved midwifery work. So, even though I eagerly accepted God's call, it is a step of faith for me to trust that God has something even better for me and my family. Hesston College is the answer to much soul-searching." —Susan Wheeler

As a Pastoral Ministries student, Susan Wheeler recognizes that at Hesston College she can work with others to discern what kind of ministry best suits her.

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Swartzendruber, Lloyd, 78, Fairview, Mich., died Nov. 22. Spouse: Helen Wertz Swartzendruber. Parents: Daniel and Mary Swartzendruber (deceased). Other survivors: children Jane Mast, Lloyd, Beth Miller; six grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 25 at Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church.

Troyer, Ethel Cordelle Yoder, 84, Wellman, Iowa, died Nov. 21. Spouse: Raymon Troyer. Parents: Emery and Anna Schlatter Yoder (deceased). Other survivors: children Janet Keim, Gene, David, Gilbert, Dale; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Yoder, Katie Miller, 91, Haven, Kan. died Nov. 25 of a stroke. Spouse: Rueben Yoder (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Susie Miller (deceased). Survivors: children Harold, Erma Seal, Norman; eight grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Yoder Mennonite Church, Haven.

classifieds

- **Cross Connections**, a youth ministry, is seeking a ***director*** immediately in the New Holland, Pa., area. Persons interested in a full- or part-time position may apply. Please send your resume to Glenn Z. Horst, 817 White Oak Road, Denver, PA 17517.

- **Amigo Centre** has an immediate opening for a ***secretary/receptionist***. This is a full-time salaried position with benefits. Please contact Dana Sommers at 616-651-2811; email Dana@amigocentre.org, or write to Amigo Centre, 26455 Banker Rd., Sturgis, MI 49091.

- **Shalom Christian Academy** (grades K-12, enrollment 400) is seeking an ***elementary/middle school principal***. Send resume to Conrad Swartzentruber, 126 Social Island Road, Chambersburg, PA 17201; 717-375-2223.

- **Amigo Centre** has an immediate opening for an ***assistant to the food service manager***. This is a full-time salaried position with benefits. Please contact Dana Sommers at 616-651-2811; email Dana@amigocentre.org, or write to Amigo Centre, 26455 Banker Rd., Sturgis, MI 49091.

- **Illinois and Central District Conferences** are seeking one full-time ***conference minister*** to serve the Mennonite churches in Illinois, eastern Missouri and Wisconsin beginning June 1, 1999. For a job description, contact Robert Nolt by Jan. 31, 1999, at 309-367-4892; email renolt@juno.com.

- **Friendship Community**, Lancaster, Pa., has a full-time ***program supervisor position*** available. Responsibilities include overseeing a community home for people with developmental disabilities and the direct care staff. Qualifications: college degree and experience with people with developmental disabilities. Salary and excellent benefits. Call Director of Human Resources at 717-656-2466 ext. 102.

- **Friendship Community**, Lancaster, Pa., has part-time ***community living adviser*** weekend positions available. Responsibilities include caring for people with developmental disabilities in a community home. Must be at least 18 years of age and possess a high school diploma or equivalent. Call Director of Human Resources at 717-656-2466 ext. 102.

- **Oaklawn** has an immediate opening for a ***director of development***. The successful candidate will have a minimum of 5 years fund-raising, donor development and planned giving experience.

  If interested, please contact Oaklawn, Human Resources, P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46526; 800-282-0809.

- **Pilgrims Mennonite Church** in Akron, Pa., is seeking a 1/4-time ***pastor***. The church is an exciting community of people with diverse Christian experience, including many that have lived and worked overseas. Pilgrims is a member of the Lancaster Conference of Mennonite Churches.

  For more information and a job description, please call David Franklin at 717-859-3049; email David_B_Franklin@mail.mcc.org.

- **Growing, urban congregation** seeks full-time ***lead pastor*** to begin 9-99. Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church has about 175 active members and attenders. Key responsibilities include working with multiple staff, leadership committees, preaching, counseling and teaching. Strong Anabaptist focus a must.

  Send MLI form to Larry Hauder, PNW Conference Minister, 2028 N. 16th St., Boise, ID 83702; email questions to lhauder@compuserve.com.

- **Marion Mennonite Church**, a growing congregation located in the Cumberland Valley two hours from Lancaster, Pa., and Harrisonburg, Va., is seeking a full-time ***associate pastor***. Areas of ministry include youth/young adults, music/worship and cell group oversight.

  Request more information or send resume to Joyce Lehman, Marion Mennonite Church, 4365 Molly Pitcher Hwy., Chambersburg, PA 17201; 717-375-4309.

- **Service Adventure**, an inter-Mennonite 10 1/2-month service-learning program for young adults ages 17-20, needs qualified ***leaders***. Leadership experience, interest in young adults, spiritual discernment and conflict resolution skills are desired. Two-year term. Accepting applications now for terms beginning fall 1999.

  Information: Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, 219-294-7523; email kent@mbm.org.

- **Hesston College *resident director for men's*** residence hall. The resident director will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff; assist in enforcement of campus standards. Qualifications: strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite Church, leadership ability, listening and relational skills. Two-year commitment minimum. Bachelor's degree preferred.

  Apply to Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email CharH@hesston.edu; or call 316-327-8234 for information. Application deadline: March 12. Position available mid-August 1999.

- **Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship**, Boise, Idaho, seeks a full-time ***pastor or pastoral team***. Interested people need to be energetic, open to incorporating the congregation's gifts in worship, people-oriented, committed to church growth and community outreach. Pastoral training and experience are required with skills in relationships with the youth, speaking and fellowship.

  For additional details or questions, contact Karen Nolt, search committee chair, 208-853-8725; email kjnolt@hotmail.com. Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship, 1520 N. 12th St., Boise, ID 83702.

- **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary** announces a half-time teaching faculty opening in ***pastoral care***, with competency to teach pastoral counseling. Appointment to this position, for a candidate with theological and ethical perspectives congruent with the Anabaptist and Mennonite faith-tradition, is with a view to continuing employment. The position requires pastoral experience and a doctoral degree (preferably Ph.D.) with expertise in pastoral care and counseling, as well as good teaching and supervisory skills. The appointment begins in August 1999 or later. Application deadline is Feb. 26, 1999.

  Send letter of application with vitae and all transcripts (undergraduate and graduate), and request three references to be sent (one from pastor and two on academic quality and/or teaching and counseling strength) to Dean Willard M. Swartley, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; email wswartley@ambs.edu. AMBS is an equal opportunity employer.

Classified advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time placement is $1 per word, minimum of $25. To place a classified ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Melanie Mueller.

by Omar Eby

Envy of the wicked

God is not in all (the evil man's) thoughts. … He leaves no place for God in all his schemes.
—Psalm 10:4

Some days, God-haunted, God-hungry, I am envious—without fear, without guilt, without shame—of that person of whom it is said, "God is not in all his thoughts." I think, What an absolute sense of peace such a "wicked" man, cleansed-of-God, has gained as he "crouches" in his "den"—smiling, no doubt—as he "plots crafty schemes" for the good life! How free he is of seeking the hidden Lord, of dropping the gross ore of his motives into the refiner's fire, of waiting for the wisdom of his godly companions! He is not troubled by any such restraints because "God is not in any of his thoughts."

Why not relax? The Lord is "standing far off, hiding himself in the time when the oppressed need him" (10:1). The without-God know that "he has hidden his face and has seen nothing" (10:11). "God … does not care" (10:13). Even the godly poet dares to rebuke God as hidden and disengaged: "You see the wicked and their mischief" (10:14). "Break their power" (10:15); "bring justice" (10:18). And what is their wickedness? "They hunt down the poor" (10:2) and "drive orphans and people from their homes" (10:18). I read in the papers of Christian bankers and real estate agents who want to drive out the greenery to build themselves bigger barns.

Yet a curious acknowledgment of God's existence lies like a stain in the crafty person's mind. "God has forgotten," the ancient wicked say. So God is in their thoughts after all. The verse better fits our modern secularists, who have learned how to live and die without a thought about God. Of whom indeed it can be said, "God is not in their thoughts."

O Lord, my thoughts are not your thoughts, as you declared; yet, let my thoughts be transposed into prayers of praise. Amen.

Three panels of the Spirit

How long … ? Look on me … I will sing … .
—Psalm 13:1, 3, 6

This six-verse Psalm falls naturally into three parts, like a religious triptych. Three hinged panels of the Spirit, in three rhetorical modes, three voices: (1) interrogative: "How long? How Long? How long? How long?" (2) imperative: "Look. Answer. Give light" and (3) declarative: "I trust. My heart rejoices. I will sing."

"How long?" Often I have the sense of abandonment, of hanging by my fingertips on the outside of life, of that silent unhurrying spiritual force unaware of my clamoring to get in, like the anguished cries of the first panel: "How long? How long?" But I have no enemy (13:2) as King David had, with sedition in his household. My despairing heart becomes my enemy, whispering that perhaps I try for things too great for me.

"Look on me." Often I think I appear to the Lord as an arrogant Pharisee, beating my breast, crying to the Lord, "Look on me; answer." Almost immediately I am ashamed of this clamoring for divine attention. O but I crave the Father's bosom; does he not also want the old, faltering, too-often unbeliever? Surely not only the fresh child: "Let the little ones come unto me."

"I will sing." Then the spiritual swing of the heart from despair to exaltation, common in the Psalms, mirrored again in Gerard Manley Hopkins' sonnets (but not the "terrible" ones). Sometimes, too, my heart sings wildly from its clamped-shut cage of convention. I will not let anyone look on my exaltation, my ecstasy, my spiritual abandonment. Pride? Conventional? God knows otherwise.

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts, O Lord? For when you look on me, I sing. Amen.

Omar Eby teaches at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. His column appears once each month.

Sometimes my heart sings wildly from its clamped-shut cage of convention. I will not let anyone look on my exaltation, my ecstasy, my spiritual abandonment. Pride? Conventional? God knows otherwise.

Faith resources

Music in Worship: A Mennonite Perspective, edited by Bernie Neufeld (Herald Press, 1998, $14.99 U.S., $21.50 Cdn.), includes 14 essays by Mennonites on the structures of meaning in congregational song and worship.

God's Week Has Seven Days: Monday Musings for Marketplace Christians by Wally Kroeker (Herald Press, 1998, $8.99 U.S., $12.85 Cdn.) contains 52 weekly musings for anyone with work to do, whether grocery shopping, selling cars or hoeing weeds.

The Changing Face of Health Care, edited by John F. Kilner, Robert D. Orr and Judith Allen Shelly (Eerdmans, 1998, $19), is a Christian appraisal of managed care, resource allocation and patient-caregiver relationships.

Abiding: Landscape of the Soul (Eerdmans, 1998, $35) includes black-and-white photos by David Lubbers and poetry by Stephen Rowe. It promotes meditation on the world and our relationship to it.

Africa: In Bondage to Debt (Church World Service) is a six-page study/action resource introducing the crushing impact of foreign debt on Africa's poorest nations. It is available for $.30 each (4/$1) from CWS, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515-0968, 800-297-1516.

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Rich Preheim

Darkness amid the Christmas lights

In response to the Christmas season's overwhelming and pervasive messages of joy and hope, allow me to add one cynical voice crying in the wilderness:

I bring you good tidings of great joy ...
Bah, humbug
It's the most wonderful time of the year...
Oh, go stuff a Christmas stocking.
'Tis the season to be jolly ...
Is it baseball season already?

If the spirit of this time of year—as conveyed in word, song and advertising—is solely one of festiveness and light, please fast-forward to the routine and darkness of January and February. The holidays are stressful and frustrating enough without the added pressure of trying to muster up expected levels of Christmas cheer. At least after New Year's, we Grinches and Scrooges can get down to the day-to-day realities of life without having to endure any more choruses of "We wish you a merry Christmas."

The Messiah came because we are human: captive and needing freedom, blind and needing sight, oppressed and needing release.

But despite prevailing pressures to the contrary, there is fortunately plenty of room for Grinch, Scrooge and all sorts of other holiday wet blankets. While Christmas is a time of great joy, we all do not have to feel joyous. In fact, whatever warm fuzzies the spirit of the season may be, it is also appropriate to feel cold, tired, depressed, exasperated, sorrowful or generally cranky.

Those feelings reflect what it means to be mortal, to struggle and scratch and claw and endeavor to persevere against powers and principalities of all sorts. God recognizes that, although such is not God's wish for us. That is why Emmanuel first came to Israel, a weary and burdened people. The birth of God in human form, writes Wendy M. Wright, "was a radical act of solidarity with the height and breadth of the human condition."

Yet we gloss over that in our rush to trim trees, deck halls and buy presents. Happiness and merriment are, after all, supposed to be the standards of the season. Not that we necessarily ignore the frailties of the human condition. We may step up our charitable giving, serve in soup kitchens, collect items for storm victims —all of which are well and good. But for all our best intentions and doing the right things, we still may echo the words of that famous commentator of our common plight, Charlie Brown: "I don't feel the way I'm supposed to feel."

This is the paradox of the season: As Christians, we are called to give of ourselves to others. But that alone doesn't make Christmas. Its foundation is wholly personal—accepting the gift of Jesus Christ, thereby acknowledging our fallen and broken condition. And because of our condition, we can—and do—deeply feel fallen and broken.

Emmanuel came because we are human: captive and needing freedom, blind and needing sight, oppressed and needing release. If we weren't, we would have no need for him (or for Christmas). As Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." We are all sick, suffering from a multitude of maladies. Some people are healthier than others, which is cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving. But not all of us experience the same degree of good spiritual health.

Life can become profoundly difficult at this time of the year. Responsibilities and expectations can increase at a point when time and energy seem to plummet. All the while, we are supposed to be vessels of overflowing grace, joy and generosity. It can be a painful combination, one that preys on and exacerbates our spiritual and emotional weaknesses. We can still be people walking in darkness, despite the glare of Christmas lights all around us.

So in the face of conventional definitions of the Christmas spirit, it is appropriate to feel not only warm or fuzzy. That acknowledges our humanity and the reasons for the Messiah's arrival. Just as he came to Israel some two millennia ago, those for whom Christmas painfully exposes our fallen and broken condition can take comfort knowing that Emmanuel comes to us again on Dec. 25.—*rp*-

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December 29, 1998

Who are these guys?

See page 6 for an interview with the general secretaries of the three Mennonite bodies seeking to merge.

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11 MCC comes to the aid of Iraqi victims
12 Integration traveled rocky road in 1998
23 Pearls, swine and *Beloved*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—two or three paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Or you can email us at: theMennonite@gcmc.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Peace on earth?

Several weeks ago, we were reminded how close we constantly hover to open war with Iraq. President Clinton called off the attack with only minutes to spare, and we turned to Thanksgiving Day and time with our families. Two hundred and fifty preschool-age children died in Iraq because of us that day.

Did we launch the missiles after all? No. We simply maintained the economic sanctions against Iraq. They cause a shortage of medicines, vitamin-rich foods and infrastructure, which leads to steep increases in malnutrition and premature death, especially among young children. According to the United Nations, 3,500 children under the age of 5 and 4,000 other Iraqis will die between Thanksgiving and Christmas as a result of the economic embargo. This is a crisis that rarely makes the front pages of our newspapers, especially during this time of "peace on earth."

We want to be clear that we do not condone Saddam Hussein's policies and that we do not advocate lifting the arms embargo. There are no easy choices on this issue. Yet we believe that innocent lives are not an acceptable price for foreign policy goals.

We send this letter to remind readers of the ongoing violence against the Iraqi people and to ask two things: First, remember the 250 nieces, nephews, sons and daughters who will die tomorrow because of the policy of our government. Second, if that tears you apart, write to President Clinton or your senators and representatives and tell them to lift the economic sanctions that are killing a generation of children in Iraq.—*Goshen (Ind.) College Student Senate; Goshen College Pax Club; Bethany Christian High School Peace Society, Goshen; Karl Shelly, Goshen; Hesston (Kan.) College Peace and Service Club; Bluffton (Ohio) College Peace Club; Bethel College Peace Club, North Newton, Kan.*

Editor's note: The above letter was submitted prior to the Dec. 16-19 attacks on Iraq.

Of membership and consultations

Is integration stuck, stuck in the sticky mud of disagreement on how to handle a moral issue? The general boards have called a consultation. So area conferences will send their representatives to yet another meeting to make and hear impassioned speeches, shed some more salty tears, and engage in long prayers for Christian unity.

Several area conferences have indicated they will not be a part of a new Mennonite Church if it includes every congregation currently holding membership in the integrating bodies. In effect these conferences, which represent a powerful minority, have chosen to hold hostage both the integration process and the larger body of the church. They want the question settled before integration takes place

If we follow this course, who will represent the congregations that have already been disfellowshipped? Is it right to exclude the very ones who have the most to lose? Do we really think that we can achieve a perfect church? Would it be wise to move integration ahead with a clear understanding and commitment t address issues of difference after St. Louis 99, next summer's joint convention? Does everyone affected by these decisions deserve a par in the discernment processes? Do we want to establish a church that makes decisions for parties who are not at the negotiating table? —*Robert Hartzler, Freeman, S.D.*

I was dismayed at the way I was quoted in the Dec. 8 issue ("Membership: Looking for Alternatives"). What I intended as description ende up being cited as a prescription for the curren situation with congregations that accept noncelibate homosexuals as members. The best solution, in my mind, is that congregations who wish to be a part of the new denominatio would simply pledge their support for the stated denominational positions on the issue.

However, I pointed out to the joint general boards that over the past decades there have been numerous issues which put congregations conferences or the denomination at odds with each other. In these situations, the General Conference Mennonite Church's (GC) system of different levels of membership served as a sort of relief valve when there was friction.

My point was that in the current membership proposal, everybody is grandparented into the new denomination, with everyone on par with each other. It brings expelled congregations back in alongside the ones which expelled them. This is why at least five area conferences have said they weren't sure they would join the new denomination. I am not suggesting that we adopt the GC polity to allow for congregations with noncelibate homosexual members. I am proposing that we consider having different levels of membership. Conferences could be free to choose the level at which they would affiliate with and

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readers say

support the new denomination. This would allow reluctant conferences to test their commitments without being in or out. This might also include a disciplinary status for those congregations which do not comply with the merging denominations' stated positions on homosexuality. It might serve as a relief valve in the midst of our heated discussions.—*Ervin R. Stutzman, Lancaster Conference moderator, Mount Joy, Pa.*

I am glad to read that church leadership has finally decided to call for a season and time of prayer regarding integration, membership and homosexuality issues. During the year I have been working through a prayer journal, *The Best of Andrew Murray on Prayer.* Instead of complaining in my head about my concerns, I have been turning those things respectfully over to God. My anxiety and stress are becoming more manageable to me. I would like to commend this resource as well as many other good resources on prayer to the church. Also, I would like to assure the congregations and area conference leadership dealing with the homosexuality issue that you are in my prayers often, especially at night when I can't sleep. —*Lois Janzen Preheim, Freeman, S.D.*

We understand that the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church call homosexuality sin. Now it appears that we may propose to have some conferences that will accept those who want to continue in sin and other conferences who choose repentance so they can find freedom in Christ. Is this unity? Is this faithfulness? It doesn't seem to be either, according to the way we read the New Testament. We would like to say to the denomination we love, "Come on, let's get back on track."—*Lowell and Laura Kurtz, Friedens, Pa.*

Cover photos by Aiden Schlichting Enns

High regard for Scripture

I am hurt and disappointed when I read letters and articles that imply if someone struggles with the issue of homosexuality, then that person must not have a high regard for Scripture. I would argue that those who wrestle with the Scriptures; those who take time to read the Bible in its entirety and not just a few select passages; those who appreciate that the Bible has been written, pieced together and translated from oft-times sketchy Hebrew and Greek over thousands of years; those who recognize that the Bible is the living Word of God and needs to be considered both within the context it was written and is being read; those who discover that the Bible has layers of truth and are willing to work at uncovering those layers; those who see the need for the prophets as well as the law do have a high regard for Scripture.

Taken at face value, the Bible can be used to support many arguments, including the exclusion of women in ministry, advocacy of slavery and that Christians shouldn't laugh. The Scriptures are one way God speaks to us; the Scriptures are not the only way God speaks.

Please do not tell me that because I don't believe the issue of homosexuality should tear apart our churches and denomination that I do not have a high regard for Scripture. That is both untrue and insulting.—*Wanda Roth Amstutz, Scottdale, Pa.*

The debate on homosexual Christians and church membership has one big problem: Both sides are completely biblical. On the one hand, we have those who believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. The reason for believing that gay couples ought not be welcomed into fellowship comes from the Bible. On the other hand, we have those who believe that, while the Bible was inspired by God in its writing, it is Jesus Christ who is the living Word of God. The reason for believing that gay couples who confess Jesus as Lord ought to be welcomed into fellowship comes from this Jesus.

We are again being given the same choice that Adam had in the garden—a choice between the Tree of Life (Christ) and the tree of knowing right from wrong (the law). The problem is knowing right from wrong. As humans, we are inclined to judge others according to what we know to be right and wrong (and in reading the law we can see it in black and white). But Jesus said, "Do not judge ... because the standard of judgment you use to judge is the standard by which you will be judged." Jesus did not say, "When you judge, do so according to the law." To insist on obedience to the law is to be nourished by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The answer is Jesus Christ. To insist on loving unconditionally, without judgment, extending to others the grace of Jesus Christ is to be nourished by the fruit of the Tree of Life. —*Steven Johns, Goshen, Ind.*

Building a wall

The ease with which the church seems to accept the proposed two-country structure is troubling to me. Indeed, it seems that this direction is set without much broader discussion or testing. In integration we have the perfect opportunity to express God's kingdom as transcending national boundaries. We have an opportunity to shrink the structures and bureaucracy of the church. My hope was that the fellowship of our Mennonite family might be enhanced as well.

It is easy for many on either side of the border to let our church fall into this political division. But for years our congregation, Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell, Mont., has ignored that boundary in the interest of fellowship. We belong to a conference, Northwest, which is primarily Canadian. It's a rich and rewarding experience. However, the stones this integration process is slowly piling up to build the border wall higher are unsettling. Even as I write this letter, I know most of my Northwest family will not read it because they read a different (national) Mennonite publication.

The only good reason I have heard for a two-country structure is so we can speak to our individual governments or deal with particular national laws. We could accomplish that task much more simply by allowing for country clusters of delegates at assemblies which would have a minimum of staff or structure. In vain I look for any good practical or faith reason to create country bureaucracies that seem designed to divide us.—*Jeryl Hollinger, Kalispell, Mont.*

Source of goodness

I would like to answer the question raised by Barbara Rosensteel in the Dec. 8 Readers Say: If God made us, can we be so bad? God made all humans, but we have to admit that many are bad. In fact, the Bible is clear that we are all bad (Romans 3, and other passages), and our worth is due to the fact that God made us, not to any goodness on our part. Jesus Christ came to redeem us from our sins.—*Elvina Martens, Elkhart, Ind.*

Photos by Kenneth Murray

Grandpa

by Keith Lehman

Quiet and unsmiling,
he sat astride
the red Farmall H
I thought must be
as old as he was.
Waiting for the hay wagons
he'd pry open his pocketknife
and slice up one
of the green apples
from the tree in our yard
no bigger than a walnut
and so sour no one else
could eat them.

One Christmas,
my gift from him
was a thin,
double-bladed pocketknife
with a pearly white handle—
a big boy's present,
more of a tool than a toy.
As I pried open
the sharp new blade
he warned sternly,
"Now, don't cut yourself."

An old farmer's words
for "I love you."

Keith Lehman lives in Cincinnati.

Who are these guys.

For the first time in history, the general boards of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC), General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) met together Nov. 19-21 in Winnipeg. These three groups have been planning to integrate for the past decade. Aiden Schlichting Enns, provincial editor for *Canadian Mennonite*, caught up with the general secretaries of these three groups on the last day of the meetings. He asked them about their lives and the process of integration. Before taking the job of MC general secretary, George Stoltzfus practiced medicine, did hospital administration, then went to seminary; Jim Schrag (GC) was a pastor in two congregations for 23 years, and Helmut Harder (CMC) was a theology professor. Their home congregations are, respectively, Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.; First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.; and Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Photos by Aiden Schlichting Enns

> **We should ask the question, What is the cost not to integrate? And it's not a dollars and cents question. It's a witness and mission question.**
>
> *—Jim Schrag*

Aiden Schlichting Enns: *What's your job in integration?*

Helmut Harder: In a nutshell, I'm responsible for representing the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in the integration discussion and thinking through how that fits into the overall scheme of things.

George Stoltzfus: There is a representational aspect, the gathering of data, the development of agenda and the facilitation of meetings so that volunteer leadership is prepared to make the decisions that are necessary as we go along.

Jim Schrag: When I was called to this position, I was explicitly called by my board to work with integration. That has involved not only taking assignments but giving much thought to integration's progression and its strategies.

How much are you away from home?

JS: There's an ebb and flow in this, but it's mostly flow.

GS: It's mostly gush.

JS: I haven't taken time to really itemize how much I'm on the road, but in the last three to four months, I would guess it's probably 40 percent of the time. I don't know how to quantify it in hours. Often Saturdays and Sundays are as full as Mondays. So one often takes the Sabbath on another day.

GS: I think last fall I told somebody that in the previous 11 months I had missed attending my church more frequently than I had missed in the previous 11 years I was in medical practice.

HH: I've been away from home increasingly. I would say also about 40 percent at least. I've been in my home church twice in the last three months. But that is exceptional.

Tell me about your homes and your families.

GS: Mae, my wife, is at home. We have two daughters, one in Bangladesh and one in New Mexico.

JS: Our family is made up of teachers. Judy, my wife, is a teacher of multiply handicapped children, and we have two daughters, both teaching.

HH: I live at home with my wife. She teaches voice and piano out of the home. I have a son living at home as well and two other children in the city. They are all adults.

You probably have some hobbies or interests you want to pursue.

HH: I'm very interested in family stories, our own family history. I play piano a lot. I like gardening in summer and traveling. I should say, vacationing.

JS: I must admit that my pastimes are in my mind.

Is it true you drive a pickup truck to work?

JS: Yes, I do. My children say it's part of my midlife crisis. It was either that or a Ferrari. I claim my hobby is photography; it has been dormant for years, though it is still alive in my mind. I like to play golf but seldom do it. In terms of real activity—fixing and puttering around the house and lawn. And I like to write. Usually I write short inspirational or editorial pieces that I share with office staff.

GS: I love to bike, but again I don't do nearly enough as I used to, but I have the fond goal

Three general secretaries:

- Conference of Mennonites in Canada: Helmut Harder
- General Conference Mennonite Church: Jim Schrag
- Mennonite Church: George Stoltzfus

d what do they think about integration?

of riding across the United States.

This process of integration is big, involving lots of details, and it's costly. How do you as a general secretary answer the why of integration?

JS: For me, there is a very simple answer. And it's the one that is least expressed. I think this is what God wants. And if I couldn't say that to myself, I don't think I could give myself to it.

What do you think God wants for integration?

JS: I think in the larger church we're on a trajectory of unity, and this is part of that larger trajectory. On the other hand, I think Mennonites are at a point in their long history where we have an increasing obligation to be an alternate society. The Mennonite church in its various forms needs to strengthen its voice and be that alternative.

What about the cost of integration? Is it saving us money to integrate? Is that one of the reasons?

JS: I think that's asking the wrong question. We should ask the question, What is the cost not to integrate? And it's not a dollars-and-cents question. It's a witness-and-mission question.

GS: It really goes back to the late 1800s, when our forebears talked about doing mission together. There was a certain amount of mistrust that made that impossible at that time. We have begun to work together in so many ways, so many joint ventures throughout the 20th century. Jim talks about trajectory. This is a kind of natural projection of that trajectory. Alongside that is what I would call the myth that Mennonites disagree and split. This is an opportunity to expose that myth and demonstrate that we can break through barriers, acknowledge them and get beyond them.

What about expediency? Is cost a factor driving integration?

GS: Some of the language used earlier in the process gave support to the idea that there was going to be some windfall. But I think that was at a point when we did not appreciate the complexity of the process. We are not simply bringing together three different systems here. We are bringing together three different church cultures and three different sets of people. And the complexity of that process has only recently been discovered. As we have discovered that, the monetary costs have appeared to increase. The relational values of integration have multiplied exponentially. I think we're dealing here with cost, but we're also dealing with values, which cannot be measured monetarily.

HH: Integration was a "kairos" moment. It was put on the table because its time had come. And this was building up over several decades. Integration was necessary for the reconfiguration of our church relationships—the organization itself. I'm talking about the Conference of Mennonites in Canada partly, but it's also about the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. We were doing overlapping things. We have commission boards doing joint work, curriculum boards doing joint work. Certainly in Canada we had more churchwide conference layers than necessary, and integration is needed to straighten out that kind of thing. On the question of cost, I would take a little different tack than my colleagues. I think there is an efficiency factor. I don't know that we will measure the cost saving in actual dollars—we're always into inflationary prices, and we're always thinking of new programs. But in the overall scheme of things, we'll get more for our money. And I think there can be a feeling on the part of our people that what they put into budgets can be used more efficiently.

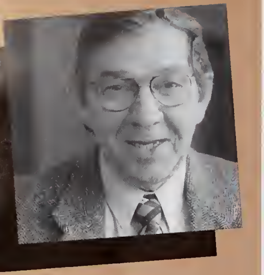
What do you find most frustrating and most rewarding about your work with integration?

HH: My frustration with integration has been how long it is taking, and I'm speaking from a certain perspective. I've been on this train since 1990.

JS: I think what I find most frustrating, and I have to say this carefully, is the uncertain foundation for leadership of the process, which is endemic to any process of change. That relates to not having an adequate plan for forward movement. To which I would like to add, I think we have an opportunity now to make a

We are not simply bringing together three different systems here. We are bringing together three different cultures and three different sets of people.

—George Stoltzfus



Integration was a "kairos" moment. It was put on the table because its time had come. And this was building up over several decades.—*Helmut Harder*

very important correction in that phenomenon.

GS: As a result of the kind of person I am, I tend to understand and empathize with the extremes in most of the issues. That means I am in the middle, wishing to maintain contact with both ends. And more than that, I want both ends to talk to each other. The frustrating thing is to try to allow and enable that to happen in a healthy way.

What are highlights for you?

JS: Building new relationships with the gentlemen in this room, with many, many other people. It's been a broadening of the gifts, and when you see people making connections with others in the church that they did not know before, you see the peoplehood of the church growing in leaps and bounds.

Joys?

GS: I sometimes despair of ever bringing about the connection I talked about earlier. The joy is the grace that comes to us, as in meetings like we had last night, where we have a wide range of reactions present in the same room but are able to sense the Spirit of God at work, bringing about relationships in spite of hurts and discouragement.

What energizes you, Helmut?

HH: The expansion of the gifts and relationships that are there as we make primary connections in the Mennonite Church, and also as we reconfigure connections with the General Conference Mennonite Church. I see a release of energy and gifts and resources in that new configuration.

Larry Cornies

Bethlehem '83

by Ruth Naylor

Bring us together, Lord;
call us to our roots.
Swaddle us
  in rich warm soil and
strengthen us
  with the winds of resistance.
Water us
  by Bethlehem's streams and
let us grow
  in splendid simplicity
beside the Cornerstone.

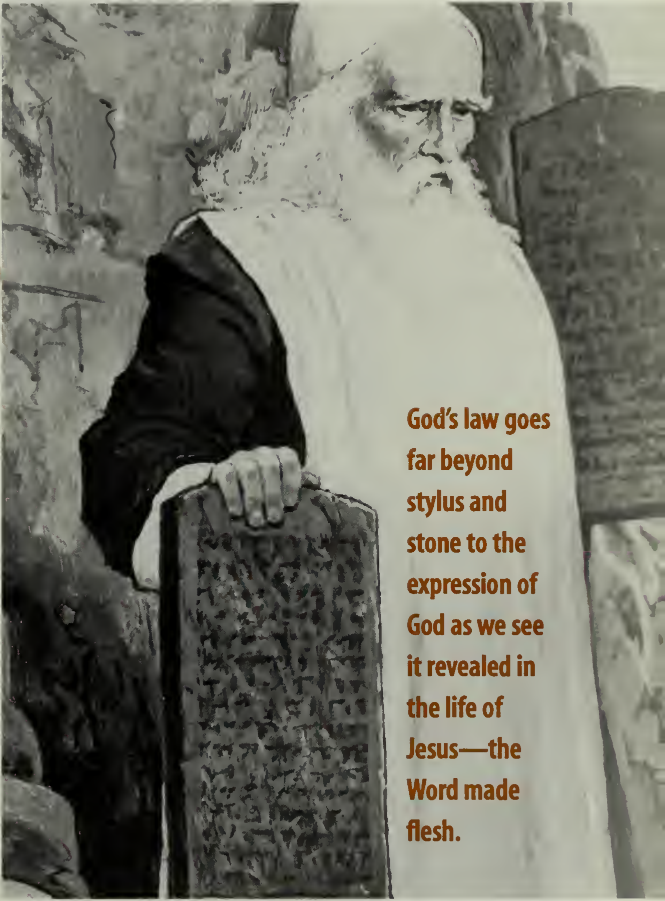
Forgive our plastic
  pretenses and purposes,
our catalogued expressions
  of faith and beauty.
Bless our intent
  to blossom honestly
according to the truth
  that is in us.
Bundle us together, Lord,
  into bouquets—vulnerable, open,
capable of bearing
seed for the future.

Ruth Naylor lives in Bluffton, Ohio.

The enigma of grace

by Ruth Naylor

Religious News Service



God's law goes far beyond stylus and stone to the expression of God as we see it revealed in the life of Jesus—the Word made flesh.

I was grocery shopping at our local Dave's Market when I heard a masculine voice call my name: "Mrs. Naylor!" I turned to face a tall, handsome African-American. His face was beaming. "How nice to see you. Do you remember me? Are you still teaching?"

Although he had matured in the 14 years since I'd last seen him, I knew at least that he was one of two brothers from the only African-American family in our school district during the years I taught. I'd often wondered about those promising young men but had never heard what they were doing.

"Brassell," I said, to which he responded, "Yes, I'm Tim." The next few minutes were spent catching up and seeing wallet pictures of his wife and children.

I explained that I'd quit teaching in 1984 and that my church had called me to be their associate pastor. His animation increased. "I can see that we've taken similar paths," he said. "I'm employed in administration of the Dave's Markets in our region, but I am also a lay pastor at church. … We've been experiencing lots of changes in our church. Good ones."

He bubbled on: "Do you remember that when I was in high school I couldn't play in the sports program when games were held on Saturdays? We were sort of like the Seventh-day Adventists on that."

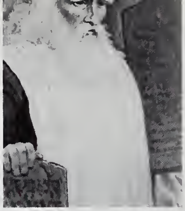
I had to admit I hadn't been aware of his church affiliation. He didn't let that stop him from telling me more. "We were really hung up on the law back then, but in recent years we've done an about-face and discovered grace." This guy was rolling with the good news that was obviously filling his life.

"But you know," he said, "when our church focused on grace, we lost about half our members." He quoted numbers in the thousands.

"I guess there is a lot more we Christians need to understand about the relationship between law and grace," I said. And I left the marketplace that day rejoicing over having seen this former student and wondering about

Jesus' Spirit can heal the tension between law and grace.

We've asked various people throughout the Mennonite world, What changes have you made in your life in the last two years because of your involvement with God's Word? Their replies will appear approximately every other week in *The Mennonite* for several months in this series called Transformations.
—*Editors*



The Spirit of Jesus is our hope. And in that Spirit is our healing. In that grace we can find truth beyond our limited human understandings—even if we can't always find words to encompass the meanings revealed to us in our best moments of earnestly seeking the heart of God.

biblical interpretation and the tension between law and grace among Mennonites.

I, too, grew up with a heavy emphasis on Mosaic law (which seems easy enough to understand), but my comprehension of grace has been far less specific. I realize now that it could not have been otherwise, for grace (like God's self) is so much bigger than our vocabulary or any one person's experience or understanding of God's great love. Jewish law is recorded in words. God's law goes far beyond stylus and stone to the expression of God as we see it revealed in the life of Jesus—the Word made flesh. It is in that expressed Spirit of God that we hope—and hopefully have our being as it is written upon our hearts.

Shortly after I was ordained, I preached a sermon on "Amazing Grace." There probably has been no other theological concept that has been as much of a growing edge for me in the last 10 years. In the sermon I dealt with various definitions of grace and admitted that even though I had experienced it in my own life, the term still seemed filled with unexplored mystery.

As I have considered various church traditions and biblical interpretations over the years, I have found God speaking to me through the Apostle Paul in his letters to the Romans and Galatians on the relationship between law and grace.

Although the controversy in Galatians 5 is about circumcision, the underlying issue Paul lifts up is the tension between law and grace. Verses 4-5 (NIV): "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope." He goes on in verse 16, "So I say, live by the Spirit." Paul's message is that those who are committed to one part of the law are responsible to obey the whole law, and Christ is of no use to them.

Clearly there is a real possibility of bringing about schism in the church at large when we fail to love each other beyond the tendency of some to cling to spiritual interpretations that are rigid and exclusively fundamental and the tendency of some others to broaden spiritual reality to the point that it loses all specificity, depth and sustainability. But the Spirit of Jesus is our hope. And in that Spirit is our healing. In that grace we can find truth beyond our limited human understandings—even if we can't always find words to encompass the meanings revealed to us in our best moments of earnestly seeking the heart of God.

Ruth Naylor serves as a deacon at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, where she was ordained in 1987 and served on the pastoral staff for 12 years.

The true heart of the matter

Part of my in-service training for pastoral ministry was a two-year course in spiritual guidance from the Shalem Institute.* I resonate with an article in the summer issue of *Shalem News*, written by Tilden Edwards, executive director of the institute and an Episcopal priest. He mentions a woman who told him "how much her Christian fundamentalism had freed her energies for all sorts of things. She no longer had to use up so much energy worrying about what was true and what to do. For her the 'heart of the matter' was revealed through a literal interpretation of Scripture and a community that supported those interpretations." As the woman made that confession to Tilden, he says it struck him that "contemplative tradition also can provide such an energy-freeing 'surety,' but it sees the heart of the matter in a different way.

The article continues: "When I pray with or without Scripture or other spiritual resources, I'm wanting to open myself to the heart of the matter, not in terms of a preset rational understanding but as a living, mysterious reality that shows me the liberating truth deeper than my mind can grasp. I want to befriend that heart that is in me and in the heart of all living beings. ... I want to place my trust in its living source: that larger Heart (which) our spiritual tradition declares alive in and around us, the Holy One who forever is breathing life and direction through our hearts.

"My unshakable trust (however qualified by surface defenses in a given moment), is in the substantial, benevolent presence of the Presence every moment. Scriptural and other words about this Presence surround, support and ground this trust, but they are not at its center. The center is a vast intimacy, a 'far-nearness,' as the medieval Beguine Marguerite Porete put it, that is the wellspring of all true words and all loving truth that is beyond words. My primary action is to lean into this ineffable 'heart of the matter' every minute and to live from what flows out of it. This action, when truly graced, can be enormously liberating of my energies from all sorts of worrisome mind and psychic rumblings. The central ground is cleared of clutter, and I can be left a more ready vessel for the true heart of the matter at hand."—*Ruth Naylor*

* Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, 5430 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814

MCC comes to the aid of Iraqi victims

Due to shortages, hospitals can't meet needs after attacks

MCC photo by Pearl Sensenig

MCC worker Wanda Kraybill (left) visits with women residents of Al Rashad Mental Hospital in Baghdad. Kraybill, MCC's first worker in Iraq, concluded her assignment Nov. 30.

AKRON, Pa.—First the United States and Great Britain conducted air strikes against Iraq. Now Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is offering assistance to victims of those attacks, having purchased $20,000 worth of medical supplies in Jordan for Iraqi hospitals.

Khaled Sudani of the Islamic Relief Agency, MCC's partner in Iraq, visited one Baghdad hospital where injured people were taken. He reported that many of the wounded were in great pain, some suffering from burns. He also noted shortages of basic supplies such as painkillers, anesthetics, bandages, sutures, gauze and surgical gloves.

Accurate numbers of casualties or information about damage to nonmilitary targets has been unavailable. Sudani saw many damaged homes in Baghdad and heard of others from all over Iraq. At least one school in Baghdad was badly damaged.

MCC and the Islamic Relief Agency recently began a $50,000 project to rehabilitate schools that had fallen into disrepair, including providing students with MCC school kits. Sudani will try to include the bombed school in the project.

In the attack's wake, MCC joined with other church-based agencies, such as American Friends Service Committee, to place a quarter-page ad in the Dec. 25 issue of the *New York Times.* The ad states, "We call on the United States government and all member states of the United Nations to honor their humanitarian responsibility toward the people of Iraq."

MCC worker Greg Foster left Iraq on Dec. 16, just hours before the first wave of bombings. He and his wife, Fay, direct MCC's Iraq programs from neighboring Jordan. Greg had been in Iraq making arrangements for a scheduled 1999 MCC peace delegation's visit. He left after Fay phoned to report that United Nations weapons inspectors were leaving the country.

"Throughout that morning, it seemed nobody in Baghdad knew of the looming crisis," Greg wrote in a Dec. 17 email message. "I felt shame at leaving behind Iraqi friends to face the bombs of the West, relief at arriving in Amman [Jordan] to be with my family and anger at the increased suffering of Iraqis."

Wanda Kraybill, MCC's first worker in Iraq, finished her six-month assignment on Nov. 30 and has returned home to Lancaster, Pa.

Susan Mark Landis, minister of peace and justice of the Mennonite Church; Doug Krehbiel, director of peace and justice resources for the Commission on Home Ministries; and Iris de Leon Hartshorn, director of MCC U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, have suggested that congregations collect gauze and mail it to the White House, requesting that the gauze be sent to Iraq instead of bombs. Gauze was chosen because it resembles the swaddling clothes mentioned in the Christmas story, is used to bind up wounds, is less available in Iraq due to sanctions, is lightweight and can be used for altar decorations.

The sanctions imposed after the Persian Gulf War in 1990 have taken their toll on food and health care available in the country. Al Rashad Mental Hospital in Baghdad receives only a tenth of the medicines it did before the sanctions. Lacking needed drugs, hospital staff use electric shock therapy more frequently than before and rely on sedating patients. "We can't really rehabilitate people anymore," says hospital director Baher Al Bhuti.

MCC in 1996 supplied 400 cases of canned beef to the hospital, the first meat patients had eaten in more than a year, Bhuti says. This past summer, as temperatures soared to 130 degrees, MCC provided spare parts to repair the hospital's water and air cooling systems. The agency is now supplying materials so the 1,000-plus patients can have new flannel gowns for winter.

On Dec. 15, the day before the attacks on Iraq, MCC received permission from the U.S. State Department to ship 14,000 school kits to Iraq.—*MCC News Service with Rich Preheim*

> I felt shame at leaving behind Iraqi friends to face the bombs of the West, relief at arriving in Amman to be with my family and anger at the increased suffering of Iraqis.
>
> —*Greg Foster*

Integration traveled rocky road in 1998

Membership, homosexuality dominated year's news

The big news of the year was, in a word, membership. Or polity. Or homosexuality. Or authority. Or discipline.

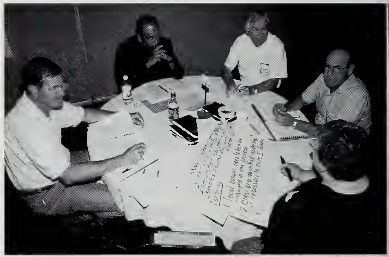
No matter how the multifaceted issue was described, it all boiled down to the same thing, clouding the work of the church and even threatening to thwart the integration process as the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), Mennonite Church (MC) and Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) move closer to next summer's landmark convention in St. Louis. And as 1998 gives way to 1999, the question of who decides who can be in the new church will remain paramount, as will the tangential issues of gay and lesbian believers and biblical interpretation.

The past year started with a January consultation called by Mennonite Conciliation Service to discuss ways to help the church address homosexuality. In the 12 months since then, two more congregations which accept noncelibate homosexuals have lost their MC area conference memberships and a third survived such an attempt. One GC area conference refused to recognize the credentials of one congregation's pastor, and several conferences have initiated measures pertaining to homosexuality in particular and/or dealing with disagreements in general.

Guideline disagreement: Meanwhile, a committee authorized by the GC and MC general boards has been working on guidelines for area conference and congregational membership in the new Mennonite Church. The committee, trying to avoid making homosexuality a test for membership, has proposed that all current GC, MC and CMC congregations—including congregations disciplined by one group but members in good standing of another—automatically become members of the new church but that each area conference sets its own criteria for membership and discipline.

"We took the step of saying there is a broader issue," Membership Committee member Miriam Martin told a September meeting of the Integration Committee. "We wanted to move beyond this one issue to set in place a procedure."

The proposal, which has not been finalized, has been met with criticism, and at least five MC area conferences or their congregations have raised the possibility of not joining the integrated church if disciplined congregations are allowed in as full members. Subsequently there has been a growing sentiment that the GC-MC-CMC merger is in a tenuous position. "It feels like integration will come apart if we don't deal with this issue," CMC General Board member Ruth Martin said at last month's meeting of the three groups' general boards.



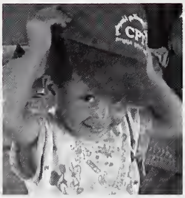
A table group works on responses to an integration-related organizational study during a September meeting in Sioux Falls, S.D. The study and subsequent meeting produced informal proposals for several "mid-course corrections" for the merger process.

Tentatively hopeful: But the year is closing with several welcome but tentative signs of hope for the future. At their joint meetings in November, the GC and MC general boards authorized a March 1999 consultation as a concerted attempt to address membership in the new denomination prior to the St. Louis convention. The consultation idea drew strong support from many sides of the issue, although it is far from certain that a weekend gathering can produce a solution to a decades-old problem. "I don't think our chances for resolving this issue are very great, but this being the church, I think we are called to do all can," said John Sharp, director of the Archives of the Mennonite Church.

The consultation will be held March 11-14, 1999, in the Kansas City area.

In an ironic twist, another bright spot came when Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship lost its membership in Southeast Conference. In a Dec. 5 delegate meeting, AMF became the fourth MC congregation—and second of the year—to be disfellowshipped because of its position on homosexuality. South Central Conference this summer took disciplinary action against Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan., although not effective until 1999.

But unlike Rainbow and other earlier decisions, the sanction against AMF did not pro-



CPT

Trying to cap demolitions

Three-year-old Dalia Jabber and her family lost their home in Hebron, West Bank, on Aug. 19 when Israeli soldiers demolished it to make room for Israeli settlement expansion. The Jabbers were matched with Rochester (N.Y.) Area Mennonite Fellowship as part of Christian Peacemaker Teams' Campaign for Secure Dwellings. About 40 Palestinian families facing home demolition are paired with North American families and congregations who can serve as advocates. As a result of its work in Hebron, CPT during the year received two death threats.

duce bitterness or acrimony on either side. The action—actually an agreement between the conference and congregation—emphasizes ongoing fellowship between Southeast and AMF, which now has nonmember participant status. Those involved credited the long, intensive and open process leading to the decision, including the use of Mennonite Conciliation Service to mediate the agreement.

"On the surface of it, Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship is no longer a member of Southeast Conference," said AMF member Jim Rugh. "But the way it was done makes all the difference."

A third congregation which accepts noncelibate homosexuals, Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, also faced discipline this year, but an expulsion measure at Iowa-Nebraska Conference's annual sessions failed to receive the required two-thirds vote.

Integration's progression: Despite the difficulties presented by the membership and homosexuality issues, integration did proceed during 1998, although not without a few detours. A series of meetings across the continent last fall and winter showed little enthusiasm for plans to structure the new church into four regions. So at their March meeting, the GC and MC general boards approved a "one-denomination, two-country" proposal, calling for the creation of parallel U.S. and Canadian bodies which will do some activities as partners. The plan has been received with some apprehension about the potential de-emphasis of binational relations.

Integration took another detour when a study by an outside consultant showed substantial concern and dissatisfaction about the merger process. That led to a late-summer meeting in Sioux Falls, S.D., of church staff and board members to process the study's findings. As a result of the meeting participants' call for some "midcourse corrections," GC general secretary James Schrag has been named by the general boards to direct the development of a comprehensive plan for guiding the next steps of integration.

Despite all the obstacles, integration did move forward. The GC Northern District and MC Iowa-Nebraska and North Central conferences this summer voted to reconfigure into two integrated conferences, while the GC Central District and MC Illinois, Indiana-Michigan and Ohio conferences approved formally exploring merger. The GC Hispanic organization, AMIGA, and the MC Hispanic Mennonite Convention gathered in August to discuss integrating their groups.

Calm after the storms: Highlighted by Hurricane Mitch's November pounding of Central America, natural disasters provided plenty of opportunities for the church to act. Supporters have overwhelmingly rallied behind Mennonite Central Committee's response to the devastation left by Mitch. MCC has received 48,000 hurricane relief kits and $2.7 million in contributions, far exceeding expectations.

A spate of storms across the Southeast United States earlier this year prompted Mennonite Disaster Service to open long-term projects in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee. Work is under way in Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Georges' October visit.

The past year also featured the first official talks between Mennonites and the Roman Catholic Church. The Vatican-initiated meeting was held in October in Strasbourg, France, with the theme "Toward a Healing of Memories."

"I think the fundamental reason [for the meeting] is that the Catholic Church cares theologically and deeply about the unity of the church," said Mennonite World Conference executive secretary Larry Miller.—*Rich Preheim*

Sheldon Sawatzky

Indonesian instability

A Mennonite pastor delivers a sermon in Jakarta, Indonesia. Although no Mennonites have been killed, Mennonites in the country have been caught up in the country's political, economic and social turmoil in the last year. "We live in a very uncertain situation," said Mesach Krisetya, an Indonesian and president of Mennonite World Conference. "We know who holds the future—that's God."

MCC delivers medicines, not missiles, for Iraq

MCC photo by Ken From

Mennonite Central Committee East Coast regional director Ken Sensenig (left) and MCC Canada executive committee member George Richert unload donated medical supplies during a March visit to Baghdad. As economic sanctions continue to cripple the country, MCC has stepped up efforts to meet needs in Iraq, including providing treatments for Iraqi children suffering from leukemia. MCC earlier this year also sent Wanda Kraybill as its first worker to Iraq. She left the country in November.

In fund-raising, ethical buck stops where?

MCC U.S. struggles with gifts from questionable sources

AKRON, Pa.—An attempt to name principles for Mennonite Central Committee fund-raising became a thorny—and unresolved—issue for the MCC U.S. executive committee when it met Dec. 4-5.

The question of where to draw the line in accepting contributions has been answered differently by different MCC entities. The provincial office in Alberta has said it will not accept funds generated by the province's lottery. MCC binational has refused any money from the U.S. government, but government funding is a significant portion of MCC Canada's annual revenue.

Board member-at-large Lawrence Hart spoke of friends who find it difficult to avoid doing business with the defense industry. "The tentacles of the Department of Defense are all over," he said.

"For any business to be completely pure probably isn't practical," said Kathi Oswald, board representative from West Coast MCC. "I think we have to be very careful. In general, I think money is money, and we take it. There may be some exceptions, but we shouldn't get too nitpicky."

> I think money is money, and we take it. There may be some exceptions, but we shouldn't get too nitpicky.
>
> *—Kathi Oswald*

MCC U.S. staff, however, were warier of accepting contributions from questionable sources. "When you start getting large sums of money for program, it does shape you," said Iris de Leon Hartshorn, director of Peace and Justice Ministries.

MCC U.S. Washington Office director Daryl Byler echoed her concern. "What does it do to us as an institution? Will it affect what we say and do? To what extent are we going to become less prophetic if we accept money from sources we're uncomfortable with?" Byler asked.

The executive committee's discussion is part of an agencywide effort to establish MCC fund-raising guidelines to eventually be proposed to the MCC, MCC U.S. and MCC Canada boards.

The concerns about fund-raising come in good financial times for MCC. Because of an income surplus, the MCC U.S. executive committee moved $100,000 in operating funds into capital reserves. It also increased the U.S. contributions goal for 1999 from about $14 million to $15.5 million.—*Larry Penner for MCC U.S. News Service*

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MWC fund to get first congregational gift

SOUTH BEND, Ind.—Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, has become the first—and so far only—congregation to participate in Mennonite World Conference's Global Church Sharing Fund. Kern Road will contribute $26,000 in annual $500 installments. The pledged amount is 2 percent of the $1.3 million cost of the congregation's building project, which was recently finished.

The Global Church Sharing Fund offers grants to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations in the developing world to support their mission and outreach. The fund was started with $600,000 from Mennonite Central Committee and $300,000 from Mennonite Mutual Aid. Organizers hope congregational gifts will total nearly $100,000, pushing the fund to the $1 million mark.

"We sense that being faithful to Jesus means linking our fate to that of our brothers and sisters in the Third World. ... The Global Church Sharing Fund can help us on that journey," says Kern Road pastor Andre Gingerich Stoner. "We did not anticipate we would be the only congregation doing this. We would welcome more company."—*MWC News Service*

Protest sends English Mennonites to court

LONDON—Two English Mennonites have received a nominal penalty for their civil disobedience in protesting the United Kingdom's sales of arms to other countries.

Lesley Misrahi and Ken Singleton, both of London, were among 20 demonstrators arrested in September for blocking a public road outside the site of a major international arms fair. Misrahi and Singleton are members of Wood Green Mennonite Church, the only English-speaking Mennonite congregation in Europe. In a Nov. 25-26 trial, the defendants were found guilty of willfull obstruction without lawful excuse. Each of the defendants was charged the equivalent of about $600 for court costs.

"The sentence was an 'absolute discharge,' [meaning] that the court decided not to punish us at all, although a criminal act is recorded," Misrahi says. "What they did was the nearest thing to an acquittal possible."—*MBM News Service*

Three Canadian colleges form united program

WINNIPEG—The three Mennonite colleges in Winnipeg have officially joined efforts to offer programs starting next fall and eventually have a common campus. Representatives of the three schools and their overseeing bodies—Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Concord College and the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba, and Menno Simons College, which is affiliated with the University of Winnipeg—signed a memorandum of understanding in a Nov. 18 ceremony on the CMBC campus.

Known as the Mennonite College Federation, the new entity will offer three- and four-year bachelor of arts degrees starting in September 1999. Property adjacent to CMBC has been purchased for a campus starting in 2000.—*Canadian Mennonite*

College education goes the distance

GOSHEN, Ind.—While Anabaptism has always placed an emphasis on community, a January college course on the religious movement will add a new dimension to that concept of community. Starting Jan. 6, Goshen College history professor John D. Roth will teach "Contemporary Themes in Anabaptist History" via the Internet. The class will be accessible to anyone around the world with a computer and a modem.

The class is being offered through the college's new extension program in Sarasota, Fla., although Roth will be in Goshen. The Sarasota extension, which started in November, offers traditional classes—both credit and noncredit—at various sites around the Sarasota area. The fall term's classes were computer-related. The winter term will include courses on the Gospel of John, the Psalms, Spanish, hymnology and religion.

by the way ...

Pennsylvania has 887 Mennonite and Amish congregations, the most of any state.—*Anabaptist-Mennonites Nationwide USA*

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Workers

Graber, Holly, Renton, Wash., is beginning a three-year Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) term in Germany as a peace worker.

Hess, Audrey, and Fred Oberholtzer, Baltimore, are beginning three-year MCC assignments in El Salvador working in rural community development.

Martin, Kim and Michael, Hagerstown, Md., are beginning three-year MCC assignments working in community development.

Nisly, Hope, Reedley, Calif., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Reedley as an administrative assistant in the West Coast MCC office.

Perez, Sandra, Ridgewood, N.Y., is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in New York City as an immigration counselor intern.

Schloneger, Mark and Sarah, Cincinnati, are beginning three-year MCC assignments in Mozambique, Mark as an education consultant and Sarah as a nurse.

Sohar, Sandy, Orrville, Ohio, is beginning an MCC assignment in Kidron, Ohio as an administrative assistant in the MCC Great Lakes office.

Wagner, Lyndell, Leola, Pa., is beginning a three-year MCC assignment in Akron, Pa., as an administrative assistant in MCC's Visitor Exchange Program.

Yoder, Jonathan, has concluded a pastorate at East Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Births

Barr, Elizabeth Joy, Dec. 11, to Crystal (Geissinger) and Robert Barr, Pennsburg, Pa.

Kaufman, Isaiah Douglas, Dec. 4, to Douglas and Jill (Hostetler) Kaufman, Akron, Pa.

Martin, Sara Nicole, Dec. 4, to Donna (Martin) and Jason Martin, Elmira, Ont.

Parker, Olivia Joy, Nov. 27, to Kathy (Wittmer) and Mike Parker, Hartville, Ohio.

Schleich, Troy Michael, Dec. 6, to Carol (Schlabach) and Don Schleich, Plain City, Ohio.

Shore, Sierra Lynn, Dec. 10, to Joylynn (Souder) and Tobin Shore, Telford, Pa.

Shreiner, Evan Mast, Dec. 7, to Bob and Kathy (Mast) Shreiner, Mishawaka, Ind.

Sultan, Asher Tesfalem Hadgu, Dec. 1, to Michelle and Steve Sultan, Lancaster, Pa.

Tyler, Ashley Kathrin, Dec. 10, to Mike and Stephanie (Good) Tyler, Fairfax, Va.

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Marriages

Bailey/Wise: Paul Bailey, Nappanee, Ind., and Patti Wise, North Liberty, Ind., Dec. 5 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Cahill/Heitger: Ellen Cahill, South Bend, Ind., and Craig Heitger, South Bend, Nov. 27 at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend.

Colgin/Mullet: Craig Colgin, Shipshewana, Ind., and Gloria Mullet, Shipshewana, Nov. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Hershey/White: Wendell Hershey, Manheim, Pa., and Wanda White, Manheim, Nov. 7 at Erb Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa.

Deaths

Gross, Ernest, 95, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Nov. 29. Spouse: Josephine Gross (deceased). Survivors: children Patricia Whitmore, Bruce, Anita; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 2 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek.

Ross, Oliver, 85, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 4 of myocardial infarction. Spouse: Stella Ross. Other survivors: children Dona, Dorothy Smith, Jeany Pontrelli, Jolene, Kenneth, Robert; 22 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Towamencin Mennonite Church, Kulpsville, Pa.

Roth, Norma Schweitzer, 88, Wauseon, Ohio, died Dec. 3. Spouse: Reuben Roth (deceased). Parents: Christian and Nancy Jauzi Schweitzer (deceased). Survivors: children Edward, Nancy Smith; 11 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Ruth, Paul, 93, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 29. Spouse: Naomi Ruth. Other survivors: children Cleta Reinford, Eleanor, Walton, Vernon, Leonard; 15 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 3 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Sebes, Stella Stambaugh, 85, Hanston, Kan., died Nov. 27. Spouse: Edward Sebes. Other survivors: children Donald, Dennis; four grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Hanston Mennonite Church.

Smith, Anna Mary, 67, Manheim, Pa., died Oct. 29 of cancer. Spouse: Charles Smith. Parents: Samuel and Nora Hursh (deceased). Other survivors: children Deborah, Delores Walker, Dawn Dalbow, Diane, Dean, Deron; six grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 2 at Hernley Mennonite Church, Manheim.

Snavely, Alvin, 87, Manheim, Pa., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Martha Myers Snavely (deceased). Parents: Menno and Barbara Snavely (deceased). Survivors: children Geraldine Hershey, Eugene, Elwood; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Hernley Mennonite Church, Manheim.

Stauffer, Grace Stehman, 95, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 2. Spouse: Norman Stauffer (deceased). Parents: Phares and Lizzie Charles Stehman (deceased). Survivors: children Arlene Longenecker, Lois Nissley, Harold; seven grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5 at Lititz.

Stere, Magdalene Streicher, 93, Tavistock, Ont., died Nov. of cancer. Spouse: Aaron Stere (deceased). Survivors: children Elsie Lueld, Gerald, Mary Zehr, Gordon, Linda Huber; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Tavistock.

Stutzman, Mary Slabaugh, 90, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 25. Spouse: Edward Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Andrew and Katie Yoder Slabaugh (deceased). Survivors: children Velma Miller, Catherine Bender; 11 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Troyer, Fannie Kuhns, 81, Plain City, Ohio, died Dec. 4 of respiratory failure. Spouse: Dan Troyer (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Suzanne Kuhns (deceased). Survivors: children William, Edna Klenz. David, John, Floyd, Richard, Philip, Sharon Perry, Roger; 23 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Warfel, Maynard, 92, Lancaster, Pa., died Nov. 27. Spouse: Ida Eshleman Warfel (deceased). Parents: Maynard and Fannie Huber Warfel (deceased). Survivors: children Jay, Grace Harnish, Miriam Noll; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 1 at New Danville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

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- **Lititz Mennonite Church** has an immediate opening for a half-time ***youth pastor***. For further questions, call the church office at 717-626-8237 or write the church at 165 E. Front St., Lititz, PA 17543.

- **Amigo Centre** has an immediate opening for a ***secretary/receptionist***. This is a full-time salaried position with benefits. Please contact Dana Sommers at 616-651-2811; email Dana@amigocentre.org, or write to Amigo Centre, 26455 Banker Rd., Sturgis, MI 49091.

- **Shalom Christian Academy** (grades K-12, enrollment 400) is seeking an ***elementary/middle school principal***. Send resume to Conrad Swartzentruber, 126 Social Island Road, Chambersburg, PA 17201; 717-375-2223.

- **Amigo Centre** has an immediate opening for an ***assistant to the food service manager***. This is a full-time salaried position with benefits. Please contact Dana Sommers at 616-651-2811; email Dana@amigocentre.org, or write to Amigo Centre, 26455 Banker Rd., Sturgis, MI 49091.

- **Eastern Mennonite University: *Women's field hockey coach***. Lead NCAA Division III nationally ranked team. If interested, please send a letter of application, resume and three references to William Hawk, academic dean, EMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. AAEOE

- **Oaklawn** has an immediate opening for a ***director of development***. The successful candidate will have a minimum of 5 years fund-raising, donor development and planned giving experience.

  If interested, please contact Oaklawn, Human Resources, P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46526; 800-282-0809.

- **Eastern Mennonite University: *Catalog librarian***. Part-time January-May 1999. Classifies print and nonprint materials. ALA accredited MLS preferred. Possible full-time sabbatical replacement 1999-2000. Send letter of application, vita, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Boyd Reese, director of libraries, EMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email reesebt@emu.edu. Review will begin immediately. AAEOE

- **Marion Mennonite Church**, a growing congregation located in the Cumberland Valley two hours from Lancaster, Pa., and Harrisonburg, Va., is seeking a full-time ***associate pastor***. Areas of ministry include youth/young adults, music/worship and cell group oversight.

  Request more information or send resume to Joyce Lehman, Marion Mennonite Church, 4365 Molly Pitcher Hwy., Chambersburg, PA 17201; 717-375-4309.

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- **Goshen College**, a four-year liberal arts institution, is accepting applications for a full-time, tenure-track position in ***U.S. history*** beginning fall of the 1999-2000 academic year. Extra consideration will go to people whose scholarship would enhance Goshen's strong tradition in Anabaptist, Mennonite and Amish-related studies. Ph.D. completed prior to August 1999 is required. Review of applications will begin on Feb. 1, 1999, and continue until the position is filled.

  To apply, send a letter of application, curriculum vitae and three letters of reference to Dr. Paul Keim, academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526; 219-535-7503; fax 219-535-7060; email dean@goshen.edu.

  We encourage applications through the Goshen College web site at www.goshen.edu. Women and members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

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- **Pilgrims Mennonite Church** in Akron, Pa., is seeking a 1/4-time ***pastor***. The church is an exciting community of people with diverse Christian experience, including many that have lived and worked overseas. Pilgrims is a member of the Lancaster Conference of Mennonite Churches.

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Yoder, John Howard (author)
A faithful teacher in the church, 3:3,8
With Jesus on the low road (ed.), 3:3,16

Pearls, swine and *Beloved*

by Tobin Miller Shearer

I went to see *Beloved* on a Saturday night in Wichita, Kan. It is a disturbing film to watch. The images of resistance, self-love and community embraced by the African-American community are interwoven with scenes of brokenness, violence and extreme personal violation. I left moved, distressed, inexplicably hopeful.

While waiting in the lobby afterward, I overheard the loud exclamations of a small cluster of middle-class white folks who had also seen *Beloved*. At first I thought they were discussing some other film. "I can't believe I just spent $6 on that movie," said one. "If I'd known it would have been that awful, I never would have come," added another.

As they continued laughing, mocking and ridiculing the film, it became apparent that we had watched the same screen but not seen the same movie.

My first response was disbelief, then anger. I even flirted with the idea of going over, interrupting them and expressing my disapproval. Whether due to simple cowardice or greater wisdom, I stayed where I was and listened to their growing clamor.

A while later I remembered the verse, "Do not throw your pearls before swine." Yes, I said to myself, they fill the bill. They were swine. Why bother with the likes of them?

It felt good to feel superior.

Then the Spirit nudged me, and I couldn't settle there. I couldn't settle there because that's exactly what racism would most like me to do.

Whenever I decide to remain silent, to define my white sisters and brothers as swine, to declare them unworthy of my time and attention, racism wins. The status quo remains in place. My faith grows stagnant.

However, my point is not to second-guess myself as to whether I should have talked with that cluster of white people. The truth is that as a white person I always have the option to say nothing. I need to be clear about that even as I discern when my words will be most hearable.

Rather than second-guessing, my point is to remind us all that there is no place where God cannot act. God is a God of possibility.

In the often overwhelming face of a racist church and society, this truth must be ever present. God acts. This is a given. The only question is whether we and the institutions we work in will be open to take risks, follow the Spirit's leadership and refuse to depend on our white privileges.

There are times when I am tempted to not only give up on white people in the theater lobby but also white people in the Mennonite church. We have such a legacy of closing doors to people of color at the point where we are closest to actually sharing power. Today, however, I choose to believe in a God who acts. I choose to believe in a God who calls us to dismantle racism. I choose to believe in a God who says, "You are all my children."

My friend David Billings tells this story. He was walking through Jackson Square in New Orleans one day when he came upon another cluster of white folks. This was a family of four standing at the foot of a statue of Andrew Jackson.

God is a God of possibility. In the often overwhelming face of a racist church and society, this truth must be ever present. God acts.

He expected them to be recounting Jackson's "triumphs."

Yet this time he overheard something different. The father was telling his two young children of the atrocities Jackson perpetrated through the Trail of Tears, that wintry, forced march of Cherokee.

David was surprised. What grace! God acts.

Before a God who acts, I wonder what I will say the next time I hear mocking voices in a theater lobby. I wonder how we are being called to dismantle racism in our church.

I wonder how we can together prepare the way for our children, our young adults and each other to take courageous Spirit-led anti-racist risks. I wonder whether we will keep the doors open and allow authentic change to come upon us this time.

Tobin Miller Shearer works for Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Correction: An editing error in the last sentence of "Waiting for Meaning" by Ted Lewis (Mediaculture, Dec. 15, p. 15) changed the meaning of the author's original intent. Ted wants his daughters to gain a positive aesthetic sensibility and to *not gain* a media aesthetic that defies meaning. We apologize for the error.

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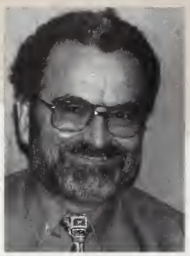

J. Lorne Peachey

Next year is the time to get ready for whatever

A funny thing has happened on the way to a new year. Instead of the usual anticipation and celebration, I detect dread and fear. With only one more year to go until we are in a new millennium (depending on how you count), there's growing anxiety about what might happen when the calendar changes from 1999 to 2000. It's as though we know things aren't going all that well here on earth and maybe, somehow a Higher Power will step in to set things right. Most people, it seems, are sure they won't like what will result.

Even Christians are being caught up in the growing hysteria. Almost every day my wife Emily comes home from her job at Provident Bookstore with another story of a customer requesting yet another book about the coming millennium and the catastrophes it will bring. "People are afraid these days," she tells me. From other sources I'm hearing stories of how groups, many of them Christian, are stockpiling food, gasoline and other commodities—and even guns—against what they believe is the coming Armageddon.

So how should a Christian respond to what's developing around us? How can we keep from being either naive or stupid as we consider the future and things like the Y2K problem possibly shutting down computers and plunging the world into anarchy?

Frankly, as Christians, we can't lose. "I go to prepare a place for you," Jesus promised in John 14:3. That place may be ready before, during or after the year 2000.

We would do well, first, to remind ourselves that we are citizens of another kingdom. While our lives are intricately tied to what happens in the society around us, this is not where we get our cues for how to live. As Christians, "you have not been given a spirit of cowardice," Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:7. Rather, our spirit is to be one of love, power and self-discipline. Jesus characterized that spirit as poor, peaceable and righteous when he described the kingdom to which he was calling us (Matthew 5-7).

Second, as citizens of this kingdom, we must also remind ourselves that the future for us should bring anticipation, even excitement.

Suppose some of the pundits are right—that Jesus will return and we'll never get to see the year 2000. Isn't this what our souls long for? To be with Jesus? To see God face to face? How can the future be fearful with that to look forward to?

Or suppose the pundits are wrong—that things will continue into the new millennium much as they are now? Is that cause for despair? In spite of the specter of Y2K, we live in an exciting technological age with instant communication and awesome discoveries. While these are not our salvation, with a little imagination, creativity and ingenuity, they should make it possible for us to do a better job of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and setting free the captives—in short, preaching the good news of the gospel.

But suppose the ones who are really right are the doomsayers who say that the coming millennium will plunge the world into chaos? Indeed, some Scriptures promise this could be what will take place as the end of the world approaches. Then what?

Recall what happened to the disciples when they were at their wits end, frightened that they were about to lose their lives in the bottom of the Sea of Galilee. It was then that Jesus came to them with three simple words, "Peace! Be still!" (Mark 4:35-41).

My faith tells me that the Jesus who went against impossible odds to calm the winds of the sea and the hearts of his disciples can do so again. This Jesus has come to me in my moments of fear and despair to whisper words that have stilled my soul and calmed my anxieties. I believe this same Jesus will come with words of peace and calmness in whatever future we have before us.

Frankly, as Christians, we can't lose. "I go to prepare a place for you," Jesus promised in John 14:3. That place may be ready before, during or after the year 2000. Meanwhile, while he works, Jesus also promised that his Spirit will stand beside us, guiding and comforting us into the future.

So bring on 1999. It should be an exciting year of getting ready for whatever.—*jlp*

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